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ACCENT: Box 102, University Station, Urbana, Illinois. Published quarterly under the auspices of the Department of English of the University of Illinois. Subscriptions: $1.50 for one year, $2.50 for two years in the United States (elsewhere $1.75 for one year, $2.75 for two years). Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes. Entered as second-class matter Sept. 26, 1940, at the post office at Urbana, Illinois, under the act of March 3, 1879.

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ACCENT

A QUARTERLY OF NEW LITERATURE

Volume XIV, Number 4 Autumn, 1954

WALLACE STEVENS:

Conversation with Three Women of New England

The mode of the person becomes the mode of the world,
For that person, and, sometimes, for the world itself.
The contents of the mind become solid show
Or almost solid seem show — the way a fly bird
Fixes itself in its inevitable bush . . .
It follows that to change modes is to change the world.

Now, you, for instance, are of this mode: You say
That in that ever-dark central, wherever it is,
In the central of earth or sky or thought,
There is a drop that is life's element,
Sole, single source and minimum patriarch,
The one thing common to all life, the human
And inhuman same, the likeness of things unlike.

And you, you say that the capital things of the mind
Should be as natural as natural objects,
So that a carved king found in a jungle, huge
And weathered, should be part of a human landscape,
That a figure reclining among columns toppled down,
Stiff in eternal lethargy, should be,

Not the beginning but the end of artifice,
A nature of marble in a marble world.

And then, finally, it is you that say
That only in man's definitions of himself,
Only encompassed in humanity, is he
Himself. The author of man's canons is man,
Not some outer patron and imaginer.

In which one of these three worlds are the four of us
The most at home? Or is it enough to have seen
And felt and known the difference we have seen
And felt and known in the colors in which we live,
In the excellences of the air we breathe,
The bouquet of being — enough to realize
That the sense of being changes as we talk,
That talk shifts the cycle of the scenes of kings?

BYRON VAZAKAS:

Ite Missa Est

The priest, silk vested, celebrates
intangibles. Light candles light.
He knees the altar, lips the stone.
Blue, rose, the stained glass ghosts

The marble alphabets. He buddha bows
from side to side. Hope greens his
gold crossed chasuble. More latin
than a latinist's, the latin drones.

Starched tunic and dalmatic serve like
jacks-of-cards. Like cards, they
shuffle, thumb, and pray. Not
through their fault, confiteors

Swing ballets of defunct remorse. Not
guilt, but splendors exorcise
with invocations, incense, chant.
If this can bring a god to earth,

It is a rune, a ritual of incantation,
circle drawn, to keep the evil
doubters out. The celebrant, in
numbered pace, strides gospel to

Epistle side. Give peace, respond, exhort!
Antiphonies deliver us. Choirs
boomerang. Compulsion's ceremony sings,
now sanctified. It is a wishing to be

Whole, forgiven, to be well again. Exult,
the mumble, motions mean. And more
than that, make us sublime, our own
creation, as a god, transform the

Failures of our humanhood. Ciboria unveil
like light the chalice knobbed with
amethyst. Liturgical as love and
death, eye, ear, and breath invoke an

Act, to be a body in the self, a pure invention
like an art, freed of the flesh. If
fevered hurt could do it, this would
be. It would be true, be here, beat

Stone and glass with calculated sorceries.
The arms stretch forth, crossed,
crucifixed. The silk and gold fall
back. The elevated chalice suns.

Hearts strain, and desperate, reach out
to be. Bells clash . . . Now, silence
is a wounded sigh. What else, if
not this pain, could bring gods down?

NEIL WEISS:

The Knee

I believe in fright, the warehouse
where I played, ice
for nosebleed, a red carbarn,
and my mother's candy apron
where I say, good night.

The smell of the candy store
reflecting in the guilty clamber
over a roof and then jump
so that my knee struck in my mouth.

I remember, I remember
the light struck in my mind
with that blow in the face.

I carefully shielded it,
cupping my hands around
the flaring match. But I

grew up in an enlightened time
and the light went out.
I carefully nurse my face.

Until a first spat with a wife.
And how I raged and smashed
that knee, rocking back and forth
in an ecstasy, remembering

violence in the settled crouch,
the placement of the knee
against my mouth, teeth in a cloud
of sulphur — and then my laughter.
The amazing gift of laughter!

New Hampshire

for Mrs. Edward MacDowell

Summer, dry in the pod,
trees peel, eyes and fingers
mate, some ultimate breast
bud bursts, summer's
playing with a cotton purse,
air staggers as a drunken nurse,
intelligence is no good.
The wind falls quietly on lakes.

The sky comes down, a
crazy hero striding for
relief and martyrdom
while I sit to cold milk
at the window and it rains again,
dark whistling the tigers up,
bullets rattling the loving cup,
and the first few drops fall

from lashes that are wet
and dark as daytime stars.
The latches burst, my door
swings wide, the silt comes in,
thunder and lightning
illuminate the floor—
the tentative spatter breaks
to a steady dancing pause.

Honeymoon

Summer: the Falls are listless,
the spray is cordage.
Slow motion of a taffy machine
reminds him of the sex
of stars and other things
that fashion us.

Memories of hula hula
delve absently in water;
the teeth thresh wonder
out of an apple's sugar;
the crack of a bicep hammer
springs a bell in the tower.

Then see her naked and running
in a lifting hurdle stride
stretching from the violet center,
as a perpetual Nazímova
hurries into her dark shroud
in the mind, forever.

LEONARD WOLF:

Monsieur Chauvannes

Monsieur Chauvannes maintains a dark *ménage*
à trois, but in Des Moines; the persiflage
That from his chamber issues spoils the rest
Of safe, firm deacons in the middle west
Where two is company and three a crowd
Perhaps more glorious, but not allowed.

Back from Dubuque and to his ladies, home
The Frenchman hurries and his neighbors come
To watch his hallway and each other's eyes
For thin betrayals of the same surmise
That keeps them yearning until overhead
Sounds the weird skip-skipping of his double bed.

Those who grow corn and those who sorghum press
Are sometimes troubled by his sweet distress
Wherefore they writhe in bed or pace the floor
Who suffer with one wife and need one more;
They hear Chauvannes and his spry ladies tumbling,
The sound of peril and of deacons stumbling.

HOLLIS SUMMERS:

The Terrible Death of Mister Vimont

When Beth Dutton turned the car off Main Street on to Sycamore, she was not thinking about Mrs. Vimont at all. She would admit, oh indeed, she would be the first to admit if a policeman, for instance, had asked her, that she thought about Mrs. Vimont almost all the time; but no policeman would ever come poking around, and Mrs. Vimont would keep on living in her little house with the fence around it, and everybody would keep on saying she was a perfect lady. They would say Beth was a lady, too. A person couldn't be around Mrs. Vimont for long without being a perfect lady.

Shortly after Mrs. Vimont had moved up the street, George said that Beth thought more of her than she did of him. It was summer then. They were sitting at the kitchen table. "It's one of your jokes," Beth said. She couldn't look at George, so she looked out the window at the children in the back yard. "It's a joke like, 'Is it hot enough for you?' — like you're always saying to the depositors."

George laughed his whinny laugh. "You're O.K., Beth, and Mrs. Vimont's a mighty nice lady."

"George." She made herself look at him. "George, I feel real close to her."

His Adam's apple jerked in his thin neck. He nodded as if he were the president of the bank instead of only just the third teller. "You got to build up the customers' ego. It's psychology, honey," George said, and she didn't talk about Mrs. Vimont any more.

But she thought about her, almost all the time, even when she was with Kelly. Mrs. Vimont was such a lady that you didn't want her to know you smoked, even, or occasionally, ever so occasionally, took little sips from the bottle which George kept hid under the sink, behind the Tide box, so Little George wouldn't be asking a lot of dumb questions. When Mrs. Vimont came to stay with the children, a person couldn't keep from cleaning all the ashtrays and checking twice to make sure the big yellow and orange box really did hide the bottle. Beth always gargled, too, just in case Mrs. Vimont should think for one minute that Beth Dutton wasn't a perfect lady.

Yet, at five o'clock (the courthouse clock had just struck), Thurs-

day, George's afternoon off, September seventeenth, she was not thinking about Mrs. Vimont; and, suddenly, there she was, going into Roberts' Drug Store by the Sycamore Street entrance, the glass door closing behind her.

Mrs. Vimont wore a violet and black checked suit.

Beth pulled the car to the curb; she turned off the ignition key. She reached over and took a road map from the glove compartment and fanned at her face, even though the day was cool for September, just good suit weather she had told herself when she left the house. Her arm, whose hand held the map with the road to Owensboro marked in ink because they had visited George's family again, was covered with violet and black checks.

She let her eyes look down at the new suit, mussed now because Kelly was always so excited and hurried about everything. It was not fair for Mrs. Vimont to go out and buy a suit like Beth Dutton's; it was like sneaking up on a person when she wasn't looking; it took a person's breath. If anyone were in the back seat of the car, George, for instance, he would have heard her breathing.

She lowered the road map to the floor of the car, carefully so that it wouldn't rattle; then, she lifted the map and replaced it in the glove compartment. She didn't want George asking questions, not even little questions like, "What's this map doing on the floor?" She closed the door so silently that she could not hear the click herself.

But, of course, George was not in the back seat, as she knew well before she looked. He was at home with Little George and Carole Anne, and she knew it very well. He was riding the children on his thin shoulders, making a fool of himself so the children would be crazy about him. Carole Anne would have mussed up his hair and the bald spot would be showing as white as anything. "Ride, horsie; ride, horsie, ride," he would sing and trot from the living room to the kitchen and back again.

Beth laughed aloud in the quiet car; that is, she started to laugh aloud — she stopped herself just in time so that it sounded like a sneeze. If Mrs. Vimont were standing at Beth's elbow — both in their violet and black checked suits — she would have thought it was a sneeze. But the suits proved only that Mrs. Vimont admired Beth Dutton's taste; she must have just bought the suit — as a surprise for Beth Dutton. They belonged to one person. They could laugh aloud in the darkening street.

Beth placed her foot on the starter. "Keep this minute," she prayed

to someone, probably Mrs. Vimont. Her body hummed like the motor, and the tune the radio had been playing in Kelly's room. (Poor George had never noticed how much better the car was running since Kelly had gone over it. Poor Kelly.) When she thought of Kelly's trying to hum *The Blue Danube* along with the radio, she had to laugh again. His thick dark hair fell over his forehead; he looked down at her with his deep, dark eyes; but he had missed the tune entirely. She was so happy that she wanted to shout the words which Kelly shouted, but she only whispered them to herself. The words were funny in Mrs. Vimont's body which had just left Kelly who couldn't carry a tune even with the portable radio close against the bed. "Keep this minute."

The very first time she had looked into Mrs. Vimont's eyes, she had felt the union, a drained quiet peace, like religion, as if the blood in Beth Dutton's body had flowed to meet the blood of fat little Mrs. Vimont whose hair was as white as lamb's wool. It was a cold spring morning.

Beth Dutton had stood at the sink, moving a dish mop over a plate time and time again. She tried to close her mind to the children and to George and to the days which limped after each other like a parade of cripples.

"Walk. Go. By by. Walk. Go," Carole Anne said over and over.

"She wants to take a walk," Little George shouted. "Can't you hear her?"

Beth yanked the rubber gloves from her hands and threw the mop into the water; soap and grease splashed onto her housecoat and onto the floor.

"All right, all right. We'll walk." She turned on Little George, hating his running nose and his scuffed shoes. "Hell, yes, we'll walk." And the dirty diapers would pile up and she would never get the house cleaned, and it would be time to go after Big George. "How's my little family?" he would say.

"Walk. Go. By by," Carole Anne said.

Little George ran his dirty hand down the side of his face, leaving the paths of his fingers on his cheek. Beth was sorry that he looked so much like Big George. She stopped and put her arms around him. "Kiss Mother." She nuzzled against his neck. Little George did not move. "Kiss Mother," she said. "Kiss me."

He turned his face to hers, but he did not move his lips. She pretended that he had kissed her. She said, "That's Mother's boy." Her head ached. She did not like to quarrel with the children.

But she had a terrible time getting them into their coats. The lining of Carole Anne's sleeve was loose and she kept digging her hand in the wrong place and crying about it, enough to drive a person crazy. "Broke. Broke, Mamma," Carole Anne said over and over, while George swung the front door back and forth and called, "Come on. Hurry up. What's the matter with you?"

Outside it was as cold as winter. Daffodils and hyacinths looked crazy waving in the wind. The sky was close against the naked trees.

Carole Anne lifted her legs stiffly; she threw her stomach out; she staggered from one side of the walk to the other. "Walk straight," Beth Dutton said to her daughter, but to herself she spoke her own name with fear. Beth Rice, who owned three silver cups to tell that she was beautiful, was the wife of George Dutton, teller. Beth Rice Dutton.

"Little George. Come back. Walk with us," she called without expecting him to pay any attention to her.

George held out his arms. "I'm a jet." He tore down the sidewalk towards them. "Look out, you."

Carole Anne began to scream before George knocked her down. Beth grabbed at George's arm. She made her voice low; it was difficult to speak through the lump of anger that pressed against her throat. "George," she said. "George, listen to me." She pinched his arm, hoping that he could feel pain through his leather jacket. "Just you wait till we get home, young man."

He tried to pull away from her. Carole Anne began to laugh. "George, please," Beth said. "Please."

"Dord, Dord," Carole Anne said.

"I brought you a present." George took the head of a jonquil from his jacket pocket. He held the head towards her, white against his dirty hands.

"What have I told you about other people's property?"

"It's a present. The fat lady that moved in the house . . ."

Beth snatched the flower and closed her hand over it. She pressed her nails into the petals. She trembled in the cold spring day. "Haven't I told you a thousand times? Over and over I've told you."

"I didn't pick it." George stuck out his mouth. He looked more than ever like his father.

"Don't lie to me." It was hard to whisper.

"She did. She told me to pick it. She really really did." George's eyes were bright and smart-aleck.

"We won't talk about it any more." She gritted her teeth until they hurt.

"She did tell me. The new lady on the corner. She told me."

Beth jabbed the torn flower into George's pocket. "Now leave it there — forever. And get away from me. Don't let me hear another word out of you."

George reached out and pushed Carole Anne. He ran up the street yelling, "You can't catch me."

"Get up, Carole Anne. You're not a bit hurt."

"Dord broke Carole."

"Come on. Get up."

Beth closed her eyes. She staggered on the walk, like Carole Anne. "Lord God. Dord God." She wished she could sleep a long time, until Carole Anne was toilet-trained and George was rid of his cold, until the children were in school and able to dress themselves and go to bed without being yelled at, until Big George was dead and summer lay around her all the time.

She had not known that the woman was crouched by the fence. Beth opened her eyes, and suddenly, as if in a dream, the woman rose beside her. Beth called out — "Lord," or, "Oh," or something — she would never remember what she called out. In front of her, on the slope of the yard, a white-haired lady, round and smiling, lifted her fat white hand to adjust the glasses on her nose. "I didn't mean to frighten you," the woman said.

Beth could not speak for a minute. She could not remember ever having faced another human being whose eyes were on exactly the same level, to the thousandth of an inch. It was like looking into a mirror.

"My name is Mrs. Vimont," the woman said. "I'm your neighbor." The woman's voice was low and pretty. She smiled. "You'll come in and have a cup of coffee, won't you? And milk, milk for the children."

"I'm sorry. You scared me." Beth's voice was quiet, like the woman's.

They both turned to watch George. Beth wished he wouldn't make such a fool of himself; he yelled and put one foot in the street and drew it back and yelled again. She started to say, "I wish he wouldn't make such a fool of himself."

"He's a fine boy," the woman said.

"About the jonquil," Beth heard herself say to the steady blue eyes in front of her.

"I told him to take it." The woman's eyes misted suddenly. She looked down at Carole Anne. "You are fortunate to have two such beautiful children."

Beth reached for Carole Anne's hand. "George."

He came running towards her. "I didn't do anything."

"Honey, we're going in to see Mrs. Vimont."

George and Carole Anne sat cross-legged on the fender. They played quietly with a box of buttons, smiling at each other like children in a photograph. Beth Dutton sat on the flowered cretonne couch beside the mahogany table which held the green pottery vase of blue hyacinths. Mrs. Vimont's voice, like water, smoothed and rippled over the room. Beth felt her own blood move warm and quiet. For only a moment she thought of Big George and his baths: the green electric heater on the laundry hamper pulled close against the tub, the room hot as a steam cabinet; George, laughing, his skinny body covered with soap, blinking his eyes at the children who insisted on watching Daddy bathe.

"Your house is so pretty." Beth sat taller. "It's a funny thing — you pass a house every day, going to the grocery or downtown, and you don't see what you pass, really see it, I mean."

"That's very true, dear." Mrs. Vimont smiled. She rested her hand on Beth's arm. "I hadn't thought about it."

Beth was afraid she was going to cry. "I hadn't thought about it either. But I'll never pass your house again without seeing it as hard as I can."

"What a sweet thing to say." Mrs. Vimont patted Beth.

"And you know what? I . . . I feel as if something wonderful was about to happen. Just meeting you." She was surprised at her words. It was as if Mrs. Vimont had told her the words to say.

"Dear, how nice. And I know what you're talking about. I feel it, too."

Suddenly they were telling each other of all the days which had gone before this day. It was like being young and on a date with a brand-new person you liked very much, and you felt you had to catch up on everything, and maybe this person was the person you were going to live happy ever after with. It had been that way with George at Atlantic City that first night. Beth thought of George for only a moment. The George she told Mrs. Vimont about was a little different from the other George, but he was almost the same.

Mrs. Vimont said, "Poor dear," and she said, "it's so difficult when one's in-laws try to live your life for you," and she clucked her tongue.

Beth said, "We've been here almost a year now. It's a lonely town."

"It's sad, so sad for you," Mrs. Vimont said.

"But George's father just made us come here. At the bank, he had a whole lot of . . . influence," she had almost said *pull,* "and they bought us this house on a street where there weren't any other children, and — they've been awfully sweet, of course, buying us things, but . . ."

"I know, I know," Mrs. Vimont said, and her eyes misted.

Perhaps, Beth thought, the tears which did not fall from the old lady's eyes made the color such a bright clean blue.

The tears did not fall even when Mrs. Vimont told of Eloise who had died the night of her eighth-grade graduation. "I think she would have been as beautiful as you," Mrs. Vimont said. Her voice was softly steady, even when she spoke of Mr. Vimont who, last winter, in the big snow, had started for the neighborhood drug store. "He stepped on a live wire. He was electrocuted," Mrs. Vimont said, "terribly." Beth could not keep from crying.

"I knew I couldn't live in Pittsburgh any more, not ever again. And so I came to this town, where my Mamma lived when she was a little girl. She used to talk about it a great deal. I bought this house, sight unseen, and then this morning you walked down the street."

Little George sitting on the fender, a milk mustache almost to his nose, seemed to understand the sympathy which moved in the room. He said, "Mrs. Beemont, your eyes are just like Mamma's, only you're fatter."

"George," Beth said, pretending to be embarrassed, but loving George very much.

Mrs. Vimont laughed and tousled George's hair. "We are good friends, all of us — George, and Carole Anne, and Mamma, and I."

That very afternoon Mrs. Vimont asked to keep the children. "You will let me, won't you? It's not often a person has the good fortune to sit with the children of a beauty queen. Go to a movie or something; just get out for a little while."

"Really. Really?" Beth said.

She had honestly planned to go to a movie, but as she passed the new service station which had opened on the corner of Main and Broadway, she noticed that the car — it had been a present from George's parents — was almost out of gas. She felt giddy, almost drunk, as she pulled under the dancing pennants and the twirling metal streamers. "I'm fortunate. I'm a fortunate girl," she said aloud. The tall handsome man, whom she had glanced at yesterday as she

took George back to the bank, stood beside the car. "How long will it take to change the oil?" she asked.

The man nodded to one of the square-faced boys who leaned against the gleaming white wall of the station. "Hey, Ed." The man looked at her deeply, clear through her. There had been no time to think. "It'll take the boy about thirty minutes on that oil," he said, and she had followed him into the room behind the station, without even knowing his name. "Next time we'll go to a motel. We'll do it up right next time."

At first they had met only once a week, on Monday because George was always late coming home on Monday. Then they had added Friday, and, after a little while, by the middle of summer, there was no schedule. Kelly would call her at home, and she would say, "A minute, just a minute," and, as often as not, Mrs. Vimont would scratch at the door, sensing that Beth Dutton wanted to run downtown for a little while. Of course, on Thursdays, George, blinking and bald as a man in a cartoon, insisted on staying with the children. It was hard to tell which was the best day of the week.

In four months the world had changed: Little George and Carole Anne and the housework and even Big George, who was rather sweet, though he often sat and looked at her without speaking, and once in a while he mentioned going back to Owensboro to live. "I've told you. I've told you I won't ever go there again, George," she said quietly, and he turned from her, reaching for the paper, or winding his watch, or retying the laces of his polished shoes. She watched his awkward movements with a kind of pity — she guessed it was pity — and sometimes she reached over and kissed his head. She almost wished, sometimes, that George could find a Mrs. Vimont for himself. "You only live once," Beth said. Mrs. Vimont had said the same thing. "A person only lives once," Mrs. Vimont said, "so I just decided to go on and buy the azalea-mums and enjoy them, even though they were ever so dear." Anybody else would have said *expensive*. Beth told Kelly about the azalea-mums. "She's the sweetest lady in the world," she told Kelly, and Kelly said, "Sure, sure she is," and reached for her again, laughing in his throat.

It was hard to remember time before Mrs. Vimont. Together they sewed for the children, and worked in Mrs. Vimont's garden, and canned tomatoes and green beans, never once getting in each other's way. After silence, they spoke the same words, "I forgot to tell you," or, "Did you see in the paper?" or, "Yesterday, I . . ." Always with Mrs. Vimont, with Kelly — it was hard to keep them really

separate in her mind, there was the same complete union of meeting for the first time.

"Honestly, we're just like twins," Mrs. Vimont said.

"It's true, it's true," Beth said. And it was true. Sometimes, of course, she had made up little similarities to please the old lady — like loving Strauss waltzes or the color violet, but as soon as she made them up they were very true. She honestly adored Strauss waltzes, though Kelly could never carry the tune. There was no color in the world like violet. Mrs. Vimont said so, and Beth felt very close to all of Mrs. Vimont's life: her mother, and her friends, and the houses she had lived in, and the clothes she had worn, and, naturally, Mr. Vimont. Sometimes, alone, Beth cried because Mr. Vimont had lain in the snow until the taxi driver found him. She sat at her dressing table and said, "Poor, poor Mr. Vimont."

In the eyes of her mind she could see him, just as she could see George and Kelly, the skin on their knuckles, and the pattern of their mouths, and the line of their hair. Seeing them made it even stranger that alone, away from Mrs. Vimont, she had never been able to experience her presence, even though she had worked very hard at it, holding a snapshot in her hand and trying to force the picture to bring Mrs. Vimont into the room. Several times she had slammed the snapshot on the dressing table and run from the house, no matter if the children were crying, to bathe, if only for a few minutes, in the quiet peace of the little old lady to whom life had already happened. Beth Dutton had thought that the magic lay in Mrs. Vimont's eyes. Yet, she must have known, deep inside her bones, that some day she would be able to feel the union, even when Mrs. Vimont stood before a glass counter in Roberts' Drug Store and Beth Dutton pulled her car to a stop in front of her own house, eleven blocks away.

She stopped the motor, and the presence did not leave her. She opened and closed the car door, and still she felt the clean pull of Mrs. Vimont's eyes, of her own eyes which were Mrs. Vimont's. She bathed in Mrs. Vimont's cleanness which was her own, covered with a suit of violet and black checks.

Behind the glass of the front window stood George with Carole Anne on his shoulders. Little George beat upon the glass, leaving the marks of his fingers. George's bald spot showed very white where Carole Anne had mussed his hair.

"Hello," she called. "Hello." It was hard to keep from laughing aloud, but George would ask silly questions which would make her angry, and she did not want to be angry. When she was in the house

she said, "How's everybody?" but, of course, George didn't notice that the voice belonged to Mrs. Vimont.

"Fine. Fine." George swung Carole Anne to the floor. "Whee," he said.

"What'd you buy? Did you bring us anything?"

"Bring Carole thing."

She kneeled and let Little George and Carole Anne kiss her on either cheek. "Darlings," she said. "Not a thing, I couldn't find a thing you'd like. Next time, though, I will. I promise."

Carole Anne looked as if she were going to cry. "Now, Carole Anne. I told you there wasn't anything. I've told you." She stood, although it was really difficult to rise from a kneeling position, and patted George's arm. "Did you get along all right?"

"Fine. Fine as frog's hair." George took a cigarette and a paper of matches from his shirt pocket. Beth watched him without speaking. He closed the cover of the match folder before he struck the match. He smiled at her. "Good weather, isn't it? Nice and cool."

"Fine," she said, and looked away. "You very hungry?"

"We had cookies," Little George said. "Daddy bought us cookies."

"Cookies," Carole Anne said.

"Look, George, we'll eat after the children do. You'll have plenty of time for your bath." She moved past him into the bedroom to leave her hat and gloves on the dressing table which held the three silver trophies gleaming strangely in the dusk. She did not light the lamps. "I won't be a minute," she called. "I won't even change my clothes." She did not look straight into the mirror above the dressing table, but sideways, the way an actress would look into a camera. She ran her hands deep into the pockets of her suit coat, and waited a moment before the mirror. She could not see her face, but she knew she was beautiful.

In the bathroom George started filling the tub. "See anybody in town?" he yelled.

Beth closed her eyes. She did not want to be angry. George knew very well that he couldn't hear above the sound of the water, yet he always tried to carry on a conversation while he undressed. "Hunh? Hunh? Talk louder. What you say?"

Beth swung open the bathroom door. "No. Not a soul," she said. Already steam filled the room, like perspiration. Already the electric heater was on the laundry hamper pulled close against the tub.

"Hey, you're exposing me," George said, pretending to cover himself.

"I'm sorry," Beth said. "I can't make myself heard above the water."

"Sure, I keep forgetting." George smiled slyly. "How about a kiss for your old man?"

"George!"

"Watch Daddy," Carole Anne said at the door.

"We're going to help Daddy take his bath."

"We'll do nothing of the kind," Beth said. "Daddy deserves some privacy. You come with me. I won't be a minute."

"It's O.K., Bethie," George said.

"No, really. Their supper's almost ready."

Little George began to whine, but she took his arm and led him from the bathroom. Carole Anne followed. "Carole help Daddy," she said.

"Peanut butter sandwiches," Beth said. "How will that be?"

Her hands moved separate from her mind, drowning the sound of the children's voices. Her hands moved very quickly, with grace. It was a pleasure to watch them. They smoothed a clean white cloth on the kitchen table, though the children were death on clean cloths; they fixed cocoa, and spread peanut butter on soft white bread.

"Up we go." Beth lifted Carole Anne to her highchair. "Sit down, George boy. That's a fellow."

In the bathroom the water stopped.

Beth removed her apron and placed the rubber gloves on her swift hands. She smoothed the fingers as carefully as if she were dressing for a party. A person couldn't be too careful. Mrs. Vimont said so. Kelly said so, too. "Wait a minute. You can't be too careful," Kelly always said.

"Now," Beth said. "You have plenty to eat?"

"More," Carole Anne said.

"Really, Carole Anne," Beth said, but she poured each of the children an extra mug of cocoa. "There, two cups apiece, and you aren't to move until you've finished every single drop. You'll see that Carole Anne finishes every single drop, won't you, George boy?"

"I can boss Carole Anne."

"Every single drop. Now remember."

Big George lay back in the tub. He turned his thin ugly face towards her, squinting his eyes. In her violet and black checked suit she stood close against the tub and looked down at George's body covered with soap.

"Hello, beautiful," he said.

She did not answer. She did not have to use her hands, but she

was glad she had worn the gloves. She crouched, the toe of her left foot braced against the side of the tub, and swung her hip against the heater. "Mister Vimont," she said. "Mister Vimont."

George's mouth was shaped like a zero. He might have been going to say, "Oh, Beth, you can't guess what Carole Anne did this afternoon," or, "Oh, did I tell you who came in the bank this morning and asked especially for me?" or "Oh, Beth, you are a beautiful woman."

She closed the door carefully, and tiptoed into the bedroom.

"I'm finished," Little George called, but she did not answer him.

In a little while she would discover Big George. She would go to the telephone by the bed and call Mrs. Vimont whose husband lay dead and buried. "It's wonderful to be alive, isn't it wonderful?" Mrs. Vimont always said, and she was really quite a woman. It was all a big joke that made you want to laugh in the dark house, the house was very dark — everybody thinking she was such a perfect lady. Beth hoped the little old perfect lady had bought the violet and black checked suit on sale. Mr. Vimont wasn't such a good provider, not the way George had been. She hadn't given it much thought before, but she was proud of George. It made everything so much funnier.

She looked straight into the mirror so that she could get the full view of herself. She could see without any light. It was a big joke, as if the suit had stretched to Mrs. Vimont's size. It was all you could do to keep from laughing. She moved, almost stealthily — Mrs. Vimont loved the word *stealthily* — closer and closer to the mirror. She leaned far over the dressing table until the silver cups pressed against her breasts. She parted her lips, as if she were about to be kissed, and then she pulled back, steadying the cups with her hands. She sat on the dressing table stool and waited.

"We're through. It's dark," Little George called. "I bossed Carole Anne."

"Boss George," Carole Anne said.

Beth ran her tongue over her lips. "Stay there. Wait till I come." But she heard the scrape of Little George's chair and the sound of his feet, and his voice saying, "Where are you? Where are you, Mamma?"

She closed her eyes and turned her head, her chin pressed so tightly against the cloth of her suit that she could feel the checks. "Here I am, George boy. I'm here in the bedroom."

Beside her in the dark room Little George began to cry. "I want my Mamma. Please, I want my Mamma."

She struck him full in the mouth. He backed away from her until he was against the telephone table. His eyes were white.

"Move. Move, George," she said. She dialed Mrs. Vimont without thinking of the numbers.

"Hello," Mrs. Vimont said. "Hello."

Beth held the receiver away from her and let George's sobs wash against the mouthpiece.

Later she would call Kelly. She raised her hand to her mouth. She did not want to cry yet. But, suddenly, she could not remember Kelly at all, his face, or his body, or the feel of his hands.

"Mrs. Vimont," she cried. "Oh, Mrs. Vimont."

R. LEE PERRY:

Nursery Rhyme

Now in fields
By the mink brown wood
The withered and young
Red Riding Hood

Walks in the after
Altar light,
In the furious
Half-astonished night

Of her age.
And the time claps
Down like a bell-
Plucked wind, laps

At her heels
In a spoken tide—
The yeast-eating,
After-dinner bride.

And the fields
By the mink brown wood
Are gulfed and hacked
In fishes' blood.

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NORMAN FRIEDMAN:

Versions of Form in Fiction—

'Great Expectations' and 'The Great Gatsby'

'Tis a very old strife between those who elect to see identity, and those who elect to see discrepancies.
— Emerson

I

What are the factors governing the author's *choice* and *organization* of his materials? This, I take it, is the basic question to which statements about the particular form of any given literary work are answers. When we have discovered, that is, the principle or principles which account for these two things — selection and arrangement — we have defined the form of that work. The trouble is, however, with all the critical furor besetting us today, that no single version of the kinds of causes which may be seen to govern such artistic choices has received uncontested currency, nor does the dust of battle show signs of settling.

We are told by the symbologists, for example, of the existence of universal patterns in myths, rituals, dreams, and folk-tales which, when their presence is detected in literary works, explains their organization and their moving power. The structure of these patterns, which derives from the felt parallels between the curve of human life and the natural cycle of the seasons, is largely subconscious and compulsive, being common to mankind at large; works which are archetypally organized, therefore, touch the deepest springs of human emotion and raise thereby the artist's vision into the sphere of the universal.[1] Thus one may account for the form and force of *Moby Dick* by finding analogues in such various works as *Pinocchio* and the Book of Jonah, where the theme of death and rebirth seeks its image in the sea journey involving incarceration in a whale's belly and the subsequent escape therefrom. The reason why Melville's novel took the shape it did (Ishmael's initial melancholy, the journey-hunt, the evolution in his attitudes, and the death of all but Ishmael, who survives by using a coffin as a lifebuoy) is explained by reference to the hypo-

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thesis that such a theme frequently finds its embodiment in such an image because of a primordial necessity of the human mind to search for psychic equilibrium through a ritualistic projection of its basic conflicts through natural symbols.

It may be objected, however, that such an approach in itself, while extremely useful in its own way, tends to reduce literary works to a common denominator, with the result that any number of poems, plays, and novels are seen as having the same form. If we want, then, a sounder view of the unique particularity of any work, we will be well advised to narrow down the range of determining factors a bit further; for, if the archetype is by definition ubiquitous, it will also by definition be found everywhere.

That kind of inquiry which traces the rise and fall of literary modes and themes in relation to the surrounding cultural and intellectual milieu offers another kind of answer. An author, we are told here, writes in such and such a way and uses such and such materials because these are the subjects, techniques, and forms made available to him by his age. Thus Shakespeare wrote sonnets and verse plays because these were the dominant forms used by his contemporaries; the theme of revenge in *Hamlet* is seen in relation to the other revenge plays of the period; the development of dramatic blank verse is studied as a phase of the growth of the English language during the sixteenth century; and the ideas and attitudes embodied in Elizabethan drama are analyzed in relation to the religious, military, economic, and intellectual commonplaces of the period.[2]

But this endeavor is open to a similar objection, in that its notion of literary form is only a little less reductive than that of the archetypalists. Assuredly Elizabethan can be distinguished from Restoration Drama by such a procedure, but how are we to distinguish *Hamlet* from *The Spanish Tragedie, The Way of the World* from *Love's Last Shift?*

A third step in limiting the range is found in those efforts to locate the causes of a writer's productions in himself. Here we may be merely biographical and look for as much evidence relative to our author's life and habits as we can assemble — his letters, the testimonies of his friends, his reading, his travels, and so on — or we may be psychological and look for evidence relative to his temperament, his attitudes toward his parents, the quantity and quality of his sexual experiences, his repressions, anxieties, fantasies, traumatic experiences, and so on.[3] Thus we will explain the imagery of *Kubla Khan* by reference

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to Coleridge's reading, the ambivalent structure of *Sons and Lovers* by reference to Lawrence's unresolved attempts to free himself from his emotional bondage to his mother, the prudery and orthodoxy of Wordsworth's later poetry by reference to the guilt which haunted him as a result of the Annette Vallon affair, the complexity of the attitude toward woman revealed in *Paradise Lost* by reference to Milton's many wives and his treatment of his daughters.

We frequently find ourselves here, however, in the same kind of trouble: many writers turn out to have read *Don Quixote, The Divine Comedy,* the Bible, to have had mother-fixations and/or father-hatreds; indeed, many non-writers have read the same books and have suffered from similar emotional tensions. We are forced to look further still if we are interested in discovering the distinctive *artistic* causes which are able to shape out of all these things — the archetypes, the traditions of an age, and a personality — a poem, a play, or a novel. The final step, therefore, is to concentrate on the work as an independent whole by locating its formal causes within the work itself.

The answer provided by one variety of "formalist" is that the organization of a particular work is governed by the author's attempt to balance opposites, harmonize conflicts, fuse tensions. The assumptions here are that imaginative writing is sharply distinct from scientific writing, that the former has ends (the creation of meanings through the reconciliation of contraries) and means (irony, ambiguity, puns, metaphor, paradox, and so on) of its own (as opposed to the communication of information through prose statement), and that each literary work is a self-sustaining organism to be read on its own terms rather than by reference to external and ancillary causes. The difficulty here is that, while some breathtaking analyses have resulted from the reading of novels and plays as poems,[4] and while poetry is seen as different from prose, the form of all of literature is viewed as having its generic cause in the attempt to establish ironic attitudes and ambiguous contrasts.[5]

There is another kind of internal analysis which views each literary work as indeed a unique particular, yet puts its emphasis upon literary forms rather than the Form of Literature. Here the causes of the selection and arrangement of materials in a given work are sought in a determination of what ends it in itself is apparently trying to achieve. The assumption here is that one cannot tell what a given poem, play, or novel is trying to do by deciding in advance that literature in general has as its purpose the balancing of opposites. Thus, for example,

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a lyric poem may be seen as a verbal action in which the structure of the utterance implies a dramatic situation in which the speaker is trying to solve a problem, persuade a mistress, curse an enemy, and so on, and it is the effort to effect these kinds of ends which is seen as governing the organization of that work. Or a play or novel may be seen as having as its end the achievement of some sort of change in the protagonist's fortune, his state of mind, or his moral character, involving a certain kind of person with a greater or less degree of responsibility for his actions. Here the selection, rendition, and arrangement of parts are seen in relation to one of these sorts of ends.[6]

If one novel — to concentrate henceforth on fiction — is indeed a unique and organic whole unlike any other, it will appear so only from the perspective offered by this last notion of its form. And what I wish to urge here is that the perception of differences is just as important as the perception of similarities for a complete definition of the form of a novel, and that such a definition may be obtained by following in sequence all four of the steps outlined above. In this way we will avoid partial truths and partisan feuds at one and the same time.

Since, as we have seen, an analysis of the specific end which a novel is attempting to effect is the only way in which we can account for the causes which are sufficient to make it the novel it is and not another novel or poem or myth or cultural document or case history in abnormal psychology, it is a consideration of that end with which we must begin if we want a sense of that novel's particularity. The temperament of an author, which stamps all his works, and the quality of an age, which marks all its productions, and the archetypal necessities of the human mind, which characterize all of literature, are indeed causes, but they are merely necessary rather than sufficient in themselves to create a novel. It is the choice of the immediate organizing principle of a novel which determines the channels through which these other causes may operate, it is the crucial choice which limits the range of all the others — which phase of the author's experience will be relevant to that special end, which aspect of the age will pertain to that specific problem, which of the archetypes will serve appropriately to maximize that particular plot. Although these latter may indeed *suggest* to the author his principle of organization — as, for example, in naturalistic fiction where a change in fortune without a corresponding change in the protagonist's state of mind seems to be dictated by the artistic premises of that particular school — once such a choice is made, it is that principle which takes over and by

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which we must check any other hypothesis we might frame about its form. By thus discussing the range of factors governing the selection and arrangement of materials, from the most specific to the most general, we will arrive at a more complete definition of the form of a novel than any one of the approaches outlined above in itself will allow.

Great Expectations and *The Great Gatsby* offer a challenging case by which these notions may be tested because they are so alike — both involve a young man spurred on to immoral ambitions by a woman — and yet so different — the hero of the one survives his catastrophe while that of the other does not.[7]

II

In attempting to define the specific organizing principle which shapes the development of these novels, we notice in the first place that Pip's career involves essentially the *pursuit* of illusory values, which he never manages to believe in, provoked by his desire to be the social equal of Estella ("The beautiful young lady at Miss Havisham's [is] more beautiful than anybody ever was, and I admire her dreadfully, and I want to be a gentleman on her account" [p. 130]); while Gatsby's career, although quite similar at certain points (for example, his desire to be worthy of Daisy: "He hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy, and I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes" [p. 99]), involves essentially not the pursuit of but the *dedication* to the illusion of the ostensible value of its object. Pip, that is to say, is never quite at home in his role as gentleman, never puts his heart into it ("I lived in a chronic state of uneasiness . . . . My conscience was not by any means comfortable . . . ." [p. 275]); whereas Gatsby entertains what amounts to a passionate conviction in the absolute truth of his dream ("Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why, of course you can!" [p. 118]).

The specific change, therefore, which the climax of *Great Expectations* is designed to effect is a reestablishment of a true sense of values in Pip's outlook and hence in his behavior — a change in his moral character. The needs dictated by this end are: to provide a motive for Pip's desire to be a gentleman at the cost of his self-respect and moral feelings (his resentment of Estella's scorn coupled with his love for her), to present the means whereby that desire can be fulfilled (his mysterious inheritance), and then to develop a shock strong enough to make him realize the falsity of his values and change his ways (the successive discoveries that his benefactor is a convict, that this man

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is Estella's father, and that Magwitch has been treated unjustly all along).[8]

The change effected by the climax of *The Great Gatsby,* however, is the disillusionment of Gatsby's faith in his ideal—a change in his state of mind. And the needs dictated by this end are correspondingly different: to present Gatsby as possessed by his dream (his mysterious mansion), to reveal the causes of its growth and how it came to be identified with Daisy (Dan Cody and Officer's Training School), and then to confront him with a betrayal (Daisy's hit-and-run killing of Myrtle, which forces her to choose in favor of Tom and immunity from the consequences, is the means whereby Gatsby is forced at last to realize the true inadequacy of the star he hitched his wagon to).

It is true that Pip also becomes disillusioned, but it is this disillusionment as to the source of his fortune which is material to his moral regeneration; although it was his love for Estella which originally prompted his desire to raise his social status ("I had never thought of being ashamed of my hands before . . . . I wished Joe had been rather more genteelly brought up, and then I should have been so too" [pp. 60-62]), he never becomes disillusioned in that love for her, even when he discovers the secret of her parentage, and, particularly in the revised "happy" ending, he is still eager for union with her ("Estella, to the last hour of my life, you cannot choose but remain a part of my character, part of the little good in me, part of the evil. But, in this separation I associate you only with the good, and I will faithfully hold you to that always, for you must have done me far more good than harm . . . ." [p. 368]). Through his discoveries he is forced to acknowledge the essential worthlessness of the values he had come to associate with his love for her; what survives at the end is his love minus his snobbery—a reaffirmation of the true and homely virtues associated with Joe and the forge ("If you can't get to be oncommon through going straight, you'll never get to do it through going crooked. So don't tell no more [lies], Pip, and live well and die happy" [p. 71]).

With Gatsby, on the other hand, the reverse is true: he had already become addicted to his rosy ambitions before he met Daisy, and it was with some hesitation that he succeeded in identifying their attainment with the winning of her hand ("He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning-fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips' touch she blos-

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somed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete" [p. 119]); but when his faith in her was destroyed, everything else went along with it — the world was stripped bare of value altogether — and no subsequent reintegration of values and habits ensued.

Coming now more specifically to the ways in which these two changes — in moral character, and in state of mind — served as the principle of selection in choosing the kinds of incidents and characters to be utilized in bringing such changes about, we notice the great care which Dickens took to establish at the outset the positive quality of the relationship between the young Pip and Joe, for it is the values which inhere in such a relationship that Pip must reject in favor of the false ones of social status, and it is these values to which he must return in order that his moral change be made manifest (Joe "was a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish, dear fellow — a sort of Hercules in strength, and also in weakness" [p. 6]). We notice further, however, that the presence of his nasty sister serves to make probable and believable his desire to leave the forge ("My sister's bringing up had made me sensitive . . . . Within myself, I had sustained, from my babyhood, a perpetual conflict with injustice" [p. 62]). Since, on the other hand, Fitzgerald's problem was to effect a final recognition of the utter valuelessness of his ideal in the mind of Gatsby, he took no such pains to establish any affirmative elements in his childhood to which he could return. Indeed, the picture we get of his father at the close of the book only serves to promote our sympathy for the young Jimmy's rejection of him.

We notice, in the second place, the different kinds of personality, developed from out of these backgrounds, required of the protagonists to bring about the different kinds of changes. Gatsby was a solitary youth with a great capacity for believing in himself ("His parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people — his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all. The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God. . . . So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end" [p. 106]), and a correspondingly great capacity for deluding himself. There is consequently a pathetic naiveté in his character, an anachronistically eager boyishness which survives in spite of his rather sinister underworld dealings and which finds its chief dramatic manifestation in his compulsive repetition of the "old sport" form of address. Pip, although he is, to be sure, equally ambitious, has that within him which con-

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stantly opposes his ambition; he has, in effect, a much more critical temperament ("Conscience is a dreadful thing when it accuses man or boy; but when, in the case of a boy, that secret burden cooperates with another secret burden down the leg of his trousers, it is (as I can testify) a great punishment. The guilty knowledge that I was going to rob Mrs. Joe . . . almost drove me out of my mind" [p. 11]). These differences are the natural result of their different childhoods: Jimmy's essential rootlessness as opposed to Pip's early and close involvement with a true and humble Christian man.

Thus, thirdly, the nature of the responsibility involved for their respective misdeeds is radically different. Both become entangled in immoral acts — Pip's boyhood theft of file and food for the convict, his rejection of Joe, his idleness, his involvement with law-office and prison, his snobbery, his initial revulsion from Magwitch when the latter returns to reveal himself as Pip's benefactor; Gatsby's lies, his complicity in crime, his irresponsible parties, his maintenance of a magnificent establishment without visible means of support — but Pip is constantly hounded by a sense of guilt whereas Gatsby has never a qualm. Pip practically *allows* himself to be deluded into thinking Miss Havisham is his benefactor because it suits his plans so well (the fact that she encourages him in this delusion works to preserve our sympathy for him — he would be something of a monster otherwise), but Jimmy never knew any better. "I had believed in the forge as the glowing road to manhood and independence," Pip says. "Within a single year all this was changed. Now it was all coarse and common, and I would not have had Miss Havisham and Estella see it on any account. How much of my ungracious condition of mind may have been my own fault, how much Miss Havisham's, how much my sister's, is now of no moment to me or to any one. The change was made in me; the thing was done. Well or ill done, excusably or inexcusably, it was done" (p. 107). It is clear that Fitzgerald was interested in something else — an indictment of a culture which had nothing to offer an ambitious young man but the hollow shell of an ideal and the ambiguous means for its achievement — and that we are meant to feel the pathos of such a man cheated in such a way; his responsibility, therefore, is kept to a minimum. "Gatsby turned out all right at the end," says Nick, after speaking of his hero's "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life" and "extraordinary gift for hope"; "it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men" (p. 10). Dickens, on the

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other hand, wants us to reject Pip in his snobbery (as Pip comes to reject himself) and to feel the justice of his return to Joe and the old values; his personal responsibility is thus made more palpable.

Finally, the rendition and arrangement of incidents in these two novels are accordingly of a different nature. *Great Expectations* is narrated by its hero in the first person, and we are thus allowed to follow the rise and fall of his snobbish attitudes, with their accompanying sense of guilt, and to be present as he makes his discoveries and changes his attitudes; *The Great Gatsby* is narrated by a witness in the first person, and we are thereby allowed to trace a sympathetic observer's feelings and reflections about Gatsby, the people he is involved with, the quality of his dream, and the nature of his death. The point here is that the demands of the plot are such in each case that a critical narrator is required, and Gatsby, even if he had lived, could never have qualified for the job and have retained at the same time his unsullied capacity for hope; Gatsby himself is unaware of the cultural implications which are supplied by Nick. Further, the chronology of *Great Expectations* is largely that of an extended and straightforward autobiographical account, although there are of course elements of mystery which cannot be introduced in their due order without spoiling the force and point of Pip's discoveries; but since we are meant to follow Pip's rejection of moral values and his subsequent return to them, we must be shown his career in its large outlines from childhood to maturity. *The Great Gatsby,* however, covers only the last few months of its hero's life, although knowledge of his background which is essential to the plot is introduced at key intervals (indeed, one of the chief devices for arousing and sustaining suspense which Fitzgerald uses is to raise the question early as to "Where is he from, I mean? And what does he do?" [cf. pp. 19, 40, 51-52, 57-58, 69, 73-77, 105, 116]). What must be done here if we are to see Gatsby's final disillusionment is to present him, with all his meretricious glory and mystery, in the state of illusion from which he must fall, then gradually to introduce his background and motivations so that we may understand and sympathize with his dream (while at the same time being prepared for its collapse), and finally to set in motion the accumulation of incidents which will bring about the climactic situation where he is forced to see through Daisy at last.

If the problem, in sum, is a change in moral character, there must be provided a source of value upon which the protagonist may ultimately draw, and the choice Dickens made in starting at the beginning of Pip's career can be seen as dictated by that end; if the problem

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is a change in knowledge, we must be shown the state from which the protagonist will change, the reasons why he was in that state, and the factors which bring about that change, and Fitzgerald's choice of a limited time-frame can be seen as governed by these necessities. The one novel, in short, involves two changes, while the other involves only one. We may notice finally that the series of delayed revelations which work their way through both plots are different in that those in Dickens come as discoveries to the hero whereas those in Fitzgerald come as discoveries to the observer.

III

Once all these crucial and sufficient choices have been made, the direction which the other necessary choices — regarding the temperament of the author, his cultural milieu, and universal symbols — may take is delimited and their relevance indicated (the order we are following is analytic rather than genetic: we shall not be concerned here with the reasons why an author chose such and such a plot in the first place, nor shall we speculate as to the probable order in which these problems presented themselves to him as his novel grew in his imagination and through its successive stages of composition and revision).[9] We may now ask — what elements of selection and arrangement are accounted for, not by the specific necessities of the shape of the plots in these novels, but rather by the psychological necessities of the individual authors which all their works reveal?

The central situation in *Great Expectations* — an underprivileged boy receiving an inheritance from a mysterious benefactor — must have come to the young Charles Dickens many a time in the form of a wish-fulfilment fantasy. We are told by his biographers of his acutely sensitive reaction to the shameful conditions which his father's improvidence reduced the family to, of the necessity for working in a factory which the boy was forced into, of his agonizingly early experience of the need for money and security. His novels are full of orphans who have been the victims of a monstrous betrayal, alienated children cast adrift in the big, unfriendly, adult world. There is no special reason why, for the requirements of the plot, Pip need have been an orphan; that fact of course plays its part — he is all the more ready for some fairy god-father or -mother — and the opening scene at the grave of his parents where he first meets Magwitch is practically indispensable. Yet there is nothing to prevent a sensitive child with two perfectly healthy parents from imagining a benefactor, nor need the graveyard scene have included the tombstones of his parents — any

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beloved but deceased relative would have served to bring Pip there at that time. The ubiquity of orphans in Dickens's other novels argues against the supposition that the presence of an orphaned protagonist in this one was dictated by its peculiar formal problems alone. Do we have here, then, a symbolic reflection of the anxieties Dickens faced as a boy, a psychological projection of the desire to get rid of one set of parents in favor of another, a relic of the loneliness and humiliation felt by the author when he was a child? Does this also account for the special poignancy of the sense of guilt which haunts Pip throughout his career? [10]

By the same token we may hazard some guesses as to the personal factors controlling the qualities of Fitzgerald's protagonist. I believe it is commonly agreed that Gatsby is a symbolic projection of certain aspects of the personality of Fitzgerald, who was, as his other works reveal as well, haunted by the problems of wealth and social status. Perhaps Gatsby as the man with a consuming dream which is betrayed by its false associations with wealth, crime, and privilege, may be viewed as a paradigm of his creator's deep-seated disillusionment and frustration regarding his own plight as an artist in a commercial society (the tension between integrity and financial-social success) which Fitzgerald, along with Vachel Lindsay, Sherwood Anderson, and Thomas Wolfe, among others, felt so keenly. Gatsby's ambivalent idealization of the rich resembles his creator's, Gatsby's pathetic desire for recognition is a reflection of Fitzgerald's early college days when he tried unsuccessfully to become a big man on the Princeton campus.

But if this were all, if Dickens and Fitzgerald were merely letting off symbolic steam, their novels would be of interest merely as case histories. The fact, however, that they also managed to *judge* their fantasies through the medium of art makes them of special interest to the student of literature. This is what is missing from their biographies — their superior power as artists for self-criticism. When we come away from reading about Fitzgerald's rather chaotic life we feel that he was a weak-willed but ambitious alcoholic. How, we ask ourselves, did he come to write at all? But if Gatsby's dream was Fitzgerald's, we must also remember that Nick Carraway, who passes judgment on that dream, was also created by Fitzgerald. If Pip's dream of a mysterious benefactor was Dickens's, we must recall that Dickens brought Pip to the mature position of rejecting it as false. Perhaps this is what D. H. Lawrence meant when he said an author sheds his sicknesses in his books, projects and dramatizes them in order to master and be rid of them.[11]

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IV

The peculiar temperament of a writer, then — the pattern of his intellectual and moral qualities — plays its part as a selecting principle in the form of his works. We have now to consider the general cultural causes which can account for the similarities found among the novels of two different writers. Of course, since Dickens and Fitzgerald are separated by a hundred years and three thousand miles, the surface differences regarding mores and locale between their two novels are quite marked, but in so far as they are both written within what may be called, for lack of a better term, the post-Renaissance tradition, these differences are more apparent than real. Surely the world of Barnard's Inn is not the world of East Egg nor are sexual relations therein treated in a similar spirit; but consider, as the most obvious example of similarity within difference which comes to mind, the attitude shared by Pip and Gatsby toward fine clothes: for both of them the proper clothing was a symbol of acceptance in the eyes of their respective ladies — Pip and his gentleman's suit purchased to offset the scorn Estella expressed at his coarse laborer's boots, Gatsby and his excited display of imported shirts to convince Daisy that he was what she wanted. The fact that Pip wears knee-breeches and Gatsby pink silk slacks does not obscure this basic resemblance.

Probing a bit deeper now, consider the problem of moral values. Notice the degraded position occupied by the Bible in Pip's education (p. 73) and the whimsical progress of his schooling; the barbarity with which convicts are treated, and the unjust preference given to a "gentleman" in court (pp. 353-354); the purposelessness of his idle life in London; the dehumanized atmosphere of the law office (pp. 199-200). Are not these factors paralleled by the pathetic code of Franklin scribbled on a fly-leaf of "a ragged old copy of a book called 'Hopalong Cassidy'" (p. 183) upon which Gatsby schools himself; the comfort and ease enjoyed by his early mentor, Dan Cody, the debased heir of the pioneer tradition; the ambiguous means to success offered by American gangsterdom; the superficiality of Gatsby's human attachments and the flashy vacuity of the lavish parties at which he entertained them (p. 64)? The world of London in the 1820's is only a little less disinherited than that of Long Island in the 1920's; all we are left with there is the natural goodness of the individual which shines from Joe like a halo in the midst of the chiaroscuro of greed, jealousy, envy, spite, hatred, snobbery, and cruelty with which Pip becomes surrounded (see, for example, p. 267). And Nick, in rejecting the dislocated Midwesterners who make messes for other

people to clean up, can find no better course than to reject the East altogether and go back home where he belongs.

In each case, institutions — home, church, school — are found wanting; we have a hero with no proper object for his heroism. In one of the most frightening passages in *Gatsby* the grief-crazed Wilson looks out at the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg: " 'God sees everything', repeated Wilson. 'That's an advertisement,' Michaelis assured him" (p. 170). Here, in both novels, is a world in which values are either lost or are non-existent; and, if they are found, they are found only tenuously and at a tremendous cost of human waste and suffering. The time is out of joint, and the attempt to set it right involves either an act of personal redemption on the part of the hero-victim or his being destroyed in the attempt. The individual vs. society, and the problem of appearance and reality, the two great complementary themes of "modern" literature, are tensions which contribute one order of structure to these novels, tensions which they share in common with such otherwise various works as *Don Quixote, The Red and the Black,* and *A Farewell to Arms.*

V

Thus the cultural factors governing the form of these novels. We come now finally to an examination of those factors which account for the selection and arrangement of symbolic devices in a novel that serve to maximize its plot — causes which are the least differentiated of all. Among the many heroes whom Lionel Trilling mentions, in his essay on James's *The Princess Casamassima,*[12] as following what he calls the Young Man from the Provinces formula, are to be found Pip and Jimmy Gatz. The provincial hero "starts with a great demand upon life and a great wonder about its complexity and promises"; he is poor, prideful, and intelligent, standing on the outside of life seeking a way in. Mr. Trilling goes on to stress the source of this motif "in the very heart of the modern actuality" (as we have just outlined it) as well as its roots in folklore (the youngest son of the woodcutter, Parsifal at the castle of the Fisher King), for "through the massed social fact there runs the thread of legendary romance, even of downright magic." Similarly, Edwin S. Fussell offers an interpretation, in "Fitzgerald's Brave New World,"[13] of *The Great Gatsby* which sees the object of the Young Man's quest as embodied in the fabric of American experience as well as in the ambiguous archetype of Paradise: on the one hand an image of release from limitation and the consequent fulfilment of capacity for wonder, and on the other

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of blasphemous denial of mortality and the consequent search for an earthly Eden (hubris). And was there indeed not something "mythic" in the Renaissance journey west to the American Hesperides, El Dorado, the land of the Fountain of Youth?

It remains to explore in greater detail this legendary or archetypal formula, as it appears in both these novels, which these remarks suggest. In the first place, the most obvious symbolic element which these two share in common is the youth of vaulting ambition. The problem of adolescence, of the search for something in the adult world — now to be entered — commensurate to the capacity for wonder inherent in the child's world — now to be abandoned — is surely one of the most dramatic loci in human experience. Thus, in both Pip and Jimmy we note the characteristic pattern: the dissatisfaction with home-life (the first step toward heroic status and consequently toward hubris is the rejection or loss or substitution of parents, a symbolic denial of mortality), the inexplicable feeling of restlessness, and the frequent and vivid wish-fulfilment fantasies. Along with this are to be found the naive attempts at self-improvement: Gatsby's self-imposed schedule and moral maxims, Pip's persistent attempts to educate himself; Gatsby's efforts to improve his father's eating habits, Pip's vain gestures to teach Joe how to write. And all the while each is waiting for his vague but impetuous Destiny to materialize.

We note further that the dream is in each case ironically realized through substitute fathers who are outside the law. The wavering scale of values, teetering now to one side and now to the other, is finally weighted in favor of what seems to be fulfilment, and the protagonist makes the immoral choice for which he will have to pay dearly before his fate plays itself out. Thus Gatsby gets his start through Dan Cody, "the pioneer debauchee, who during one phase of American life brought back to the Eastern seaboard the savage violence of the frontier brothel and saloon" (p. 108), and is launched finally by Wolfsheim, the gambler who fixed the 1919 World Series:

> "Did you start him in business?" I inquired.
> "Start him! I made him."
> "Oh."
> "I raised him up out of nothing, right out of the gutter."
> (p. 181)

So, too, Magwitch exclaims, "Yes, Pip, dear boy, I've made a gentleman on you! It's me wot has done it! . . . Look'ee here, Pip, I'm your second father. You're my son — more to me nor any son. I've

put money away, only for you to spend" (p. 324). We see in both instances that the capacity for wonder is accompanied by an equally strong capacity for self-deception.

In the third place, the dream of both our heroes becomes identified with a woman. Just as Gatsby's dream finds its focus in the remote and mysterious green light at the end of Daisy's dock (cf. pp. 29, 101), so Pip's dream centers upon Estella, the remote and mysterious "star": "Whenever I watched the vessels standing out to sea with their white sails spread, I somehow thought of Miss Havisham and Estella; and whenever the light struck aslant, afar off, upon a cloud or sail or green hill-side or waterline, it was just the same.—Miss Havisham and the strange house and the strange life appeared to have something to do with everything that was picturesque" (p. 110). Similarly, the image of woman as the embodiment of desire, grace, and beauty becomes confused with the leisure class in both cases: "Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes, and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor" (pp. 158-160). Compare this from Dickens: "Truly it was impossible to dissociate her presence from all those wretched hankerings after money and gentility that had disturbed my boyhood—from all those ill-regulated aspirations that had first made me ashamed of home and Joe" (p. 238).

In both cases the dream becomes objectified in a house. Although Dickens is not content to allow us merely to infer the inner corruption of Satis House and Barnard's Inn (pp. 173-174, *e.g.*), but rather presents them as literally decayed, there is a palpable similarity in the fact that both Pip's and Gatsby's dreams find symbolic tenancy in mansions. Miss Havisham's and Gatsby's homes are the external emblems of the paradisal vision, which is ironic in both cases since the latter is an imitation old-world castle (pp. 13, 96) and the former is a kind of witch's den into which the abandoned Hansel and Gretel of the novel wander to be destroyed by the child-devouring crone (pp. 84, 307).

On the other side are the corresponding images of hell. The polarizing symbols, counterbalancing Satis House and the Star, Gatsby's castle and the Green Light, are to be found in Pip's marshes (the repeated references to which throughout the novel, on both the literal and figurative levels, form an infernal cluster: pp. 84, 108, 253, cf. 161-162, 218, 439, 445, 477) and Nick's valley of ashes (p. 31). From these wastelands emerge Gatsby's nemesis (Wilson) and Pip's (Or-

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lick), demanding vengeance from the hero for his hubris.

As a consequence of reaching too high, each hero becomes involved in a penitential or redemptive journey. Gatsby's tragic self-discovery —"he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream" (p. 172) — results in no personal purgation: he is simply shot down by Wilson. But, in so far as there is a moral choice made as a result of his fall from high place, it is made by Nick "Carry Away." In his rejection of Gatsby, Jordan, Tom, and Daisy, and in his decision to return to "my Middle West . . . where dwellings are still called through the decades by a family's name," Nick is symbolically bringing the purged Gatsby back to where he started and where he belongs (pp. 164, 186). This is a redemptive choice, a return to the moral values and the stable life of childhood; a purification, as far as it goes, of hubris. So, too, does Pip experience his inevitable self-revelation — "All the truth of my position came flashing on me; and its disappointments, dangers, disgraces, consequences of all kinds, rushed in in such a multitude that I was borne down by them and had to struggle for every breath I drew" (pp. 323-324) — and, at first revolted by the returned convict, he makes the crucial moral choice to devote himself to Magwitch's safety (pp. 453-454). Although he is not killed, he does suffer physically for his hubris: he is burned (pp. 407-408), tortured by Orlick (pp. 429-436), and falls deathly ill. During the period of his sickness and recuperation he is nursed by the ever-loyal Joe, and regresses to the state of childhood ("I fancied I was little Pip again" [p. 474]) when he and Joe were "ever the best of friends." Soon after his recovery, we note, he makes a pilgrimage to the forge in order to cleanse his conscience completely: "My heart was softened by my return, and such a change had come to pass, that I felt like one who was toiling home barefoot from distant travel, and whose wanderings had lasted many years" (p. 485).

Finally, in both novels the narrator enacts the choral role of moral commentator. Although, as we have seen, *Great Expectations* is told by the "I" as Protagonist and *The Great Gatsby* by the "I" as Witness, we have in both cases a double perspective. In the former, the mature Pip recounts the story of the immature Pip living through a crucial initiatory experience, thus allowing for the narration of immoral deeds in a moral context — somewhat after the fashion of Greek tragedy wherein the chorus provides a backdrop of normalcy for the abnormal central action. Thus Pip the narrator can say of Pip the protagonist: "I was too cowardly to do what I knew to be

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right, as I had been too cowardly to avoid doing what I knew to be wrong" (p. 40); or, "So, throughout life, our worst weaknesses and meannesses are usually committed for the sake of people whom we most despise" (p. 220); or, "All the other swindlers upon Earth are nothing to the self-swindlers, and with such pretences did I cheat myself" (p. 227). Similarly, Nick comments, "They're a rotten crowd . . . . You're worth the whole damn bunch put together"; but then continues, "I've always been glad I said that. It was the only compliment I ever gave him, because I disapproved of him from beginning to end" (p. 164). Or again: "They were careless people, Tom and Daisy — they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made . . ." (p. 189).

VI

In progressing, then, from the most central to the most peripheral of selective principles governing the choice and organization of materials in these two novels, we have outlined briefly the ways in which they are unlike as well as the ways in which they are alike. We have regarded the kind of change involved in the plot, the personality of the hero, and the degree of his responsibility involved, as comprising the specific and sufficient formal cause; and here we discovered that *Great Expectations* turned upon a change in moral character while *The Great Gatsby* turned upon a change in state of mind, and we noted the difference among the kinds of incidents and patterns of sequence chosen to effect those ends. The next most specific cause we found in the personalities of Dickens and Fitzgerald, where the temperamental problems of the individual authors were seen as projected in their novels: the prevalence of orphaned children, substitute parents, and a mysterious guilt in Dickens; the naive fascination with wealth, success, and social position in Fitzgerald.

If the first level of analysis distinguishes one novel from another, and the second finds all the novels of a given author similar to one another but different from those of another author, the third examines the ways in which most serious novels of the past few hundred years are alike — in that the cultural and spiritual dislocation of the age serves as a governing principle in their organization: the inadequacy of institutions for providing a proper set of values, the necessity for the hero-victim to make up his own as he goes along, the enormous cost involved in the recovery of traditional values, and the tenu-

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ous conclusions thereto. And finally, when we traced the archetypal patterns which exist in both novels we recognized the ways in which they developed a symbolic resonance which brings them into contact, not only with all of literature, but also with man's immemorial store of legends, myths, dreams, and rituals—that dramatic repository which has its source in the primordial necessities of the human mind. And we noted here that one of the most basic of these necessities involves the symbolic quest for immortality (innocence, irresponsibility, freedom, and security, which finds its image in Paradise), coming-of-age (initiation into adulthood), death (the punitive loss of the dream of Paradise), and rebirth (the redemptive acceptance of mortality, of the past, and of moral values).

And it is only through some such multiple perspective, I submit, some such consideration of different versions of form with a view to their relationships, apart from all partisan debate and vested interest, that the full life of any given novel as an artistic whole will come home to us in its entirety. If we are interested in truth rather than literary politics, in seeing justice done to the facts rather than establishing a favored hypothesis, we have no other way.

NOTES

1. See C. G. Jung, "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetic Art," *Contributions to Analytical Psychology,* translated by H. G. and Cary F. Baynes (London and New York, 1928), pp. 225-249: A poet using archetypes speaks in a voice stronger than his own, "he raises the idea he is trying to express above the occasional and the transitory into the sphere of the ever-existing. He transmutes personal destiny into the destiny of mankind . . . . That is the secret of effective art." Jung also warns against reducing the work of art to its creator's neurosis: "The plant is not a mere product of the soil; but a living creative process centered in itself, the essence of which has nothing to do with the character of the soil. In the same way the art-work must be regarded as a creative formation, freely making use of every precondition. Its meaning and its own individual particularity rests in itself, and not in its preconditions." Cf. Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (London, Toronto, and New York, 1948 [1934]); Northrop Frye, "Yeats and the Language of Symbolism," *University of Toronto Quarterly,* XVII (1947), 1-17, and "The Archetypes of Literature," *Kenyon Review,* XIII (1951), 92-110; W. H. Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood; or, The Romantic Iconography of the Sea* (New York, 1950).

2. As, for example, in L. C. Knights' *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (London, 1937); Hardin Craig, *The Enchanted Glass; The Elizabethan Mind in Literature* (New York, 1936); Theodore Spencer, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* (New York, 1942); and the well-known studies in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries of Basil Willey (London and New York, 1934, 1940, 1949).

3. For the biographical approach, see J. L. Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu* (Boston and New York, 1927), which traces back certain of Coleridge's poetic images to the poet's reading; for the psychological approach, see Kenneth Burke on Coleridge, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Louisiana, 1941), pp 21 ff., *et passim,* and on Arnold, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (New York, 1950), pp. 10-13, *et passim.* Burke may be said to combine the archetypal and the psychological methods. Cf. also Edmund Wilson, *The Wound and the Bow* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941), which purports to examine the way in which an author's psychological "wound" becomes transformed into art.

4. As, for example, in F. R. Leavis, "The Novel as Dramatic Poem (series)," *Scrutiny,* Autumn 1940, March 1951, June 1951, etc.; William Troy, "Virginia Woolf: The Novel of Sensibility," *The Symposium,* III (1932), 53-63, 153-166; G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire* (London, 1930), pp. 1-18, *The Imperial Theme* (London, 1931), pp. 19-22, *The Shakespearian Tempest* (London, 1932), pp. 1-19, *The Christian Renaissance* (Toronto, 1933), p. 4.

5. It will suffice to mention here, in addition to those listed above, the familiar works of such critics as Empson, Brooks, Warren, etc.

6. R. S. Crane, "The Plot of *Tom Jones,*" and Elder Olson, "An Outline of Poetic Theory," *Critics and Criticism,* R. S. Crane, ed. (Chicago, 1952), pp. 616-647, 546-566.

7. The page numbers throughout refer to the Bantam Edition of *The Great Gatsby* (#7) and the Rinehart Edition of *Great Expectations* (#20).

8. Cf. John H. Hagan, Jr., "Structural Patterns in Dickens's *Great Expectations,*" *English Literary History,* XXI (1954), 54-66, where the "rhythm" of the novel (in E. K. Brown's sense of the repetition and variation of a pattern of incidents) is examined.

9. The account of the ensuing causes must, because of the magnitude of the problems raised, perforce be merely suggestive. The most that can be accomplished in an outline such as this is to indicate briefly what directions such questions may take.

10. Cf. Dorothy Van Ghent, *The English Novel: form and function* (New York, 1953), pp. 125-138. Although I arrived at my conclusions independently, I find myself in agreement with Miss Van Ghent regarding the significance of the parent-child relationships in this novel as well as on the related matter of the symbolism of the redemptive act required of Dickens's children (see below). See also G. Robert Strange, "Expectation Well Lost," *College English,* XVI (1954), 9-17, which appeared after my own article had been completed.

11. Cited by Diana Trilling in *The Viking Portable D. H. Lawrence* (New York, 1946), p. 19.

12. *The Liberal Imagination* (New York, 1950), pp. 61-64.

13. *English Literary History,* XIX (1952), 291-299.

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DAVID GALLER:

The Suspension

We had a family vase
made in Bohemia of glass,
of ruby, of gold-leaf, with blue
eyes as I look at you . . .
—Paul Goodman

I can remember . . . I can remember—*what!*
. . . Farms. Chapels. The lanes to the little villages.
Taverns and ruddy faces. The friends of my parents.
People who I like to think were drawn by Bosch.
Meadows, flat as photographs, confront me
In hallways, on iron benches, gleam as the familiar,
Vanish with my image. From the dark, my image
Confounds and hisses: "Fool! *I* am yours to keep!"

It is easy to say that nothing is peculiar,
All quite natural, that all provides
The moment of reflection, irritant and vague,
That the spaces in the noon make a way of life,
Needing no resolution but the spaces in the night,
It is easier than weeping at the face you hate . . .

I used to think I'd acquired a religious sense
Like a gem in a mountain. I thought
Of a quietly smouldering cauldron,
Of slow and frightful fish at the bottom of the sea;
The rhythmic coal and the coral glistened.
But all that has come of my parents' death
Is a sense of vengeance, a security.

. . . I remember the Gestapo
Searching the house, pacing the garden,
But all this quietly: never a word,
Not a vase was smashed, and their tracking
Of mud seemed undeliberate.

Then, at the gate,
Their leader took my hand, his other
Dipped in his blouse, producing
The picture missing since they had gone.
A wedding group. And he said with a smile,
Though his eyes were points
And his lips trembled,
He said in a voice that hummed like gears,
"Little Jew, this house is yours . . ."
Later, my father's debtor,
A German Jew,
Came with his scrawny wife and claimed he lived there.
"Seine Eltern sind tot!" he snarled.

I still haven't felt the final impact.
Thinking there is none, I begin to shiver.
Heat and cold are king of my nerves.
Light and dark: their divided daughter.
. . . I remember the car of friends that came
In the middle of the night to take me away;
The low boat over the Dutch canals; the blurred
Unchanging scenery through Belgium,
And how I vomited, after thinking:
"You are a fiery Balmung in the night!"

I can remember how people in Germany
Loved the eagle, but loved the lightning better;
And treasured most the eagle that stood the storm—
Or is this candy in the crown of Nietzsche?
In the shadow of dead identities, I wrote:
Of how my father had been a painter,
How the children playing were so like Bach.
I swore I would never join a party.
I knew I would always be looking for a cause.

I learned what the young men here believed of Europe:
I heard them speak like strange conspirators,
In bars below the streets, like the holds of galleons:
Of Paris, where I'd never been; of towns in Spain
Where the sun is cheap,

Now that the capitals of art are gone;
Of ghettos, of indestructible cobwebs,
Alive, and suited to their ends . . .

In my mind, I turned their talk of ghettos:
Amoebae that touched the hearts of the larger cities:
People like morsels of food in an iron belly,
Never excreted, only digested forever,
Assuming complex shapes, amusing each other
With tales of the world, the very next day,
If they vanished from the skeptic company one night . . .

O it so *closely* resembled the world I lived in!—
The ultimate routes to the grocer and the park . . .
The inevitable chess—but *here* it was different:
From a talkative group of eight or ten
I chose a partner and a table . . .
The silence invented its atrocious web . . .

Why did they stop talking! Why were they watching!
We poised like spiders. A child
Banged her rattle on our bench.
From the corner of my eye: the bark
On the trees was dead. We waited
Till one of us became the fly . . .
The spider scuttled down the web!
The electric heart of the fly, possessed!—
Gaps in the gaps the summer had left!
The pain of having won: having dealt
The ultimate thrust, before the ultimate event . . .
The abrupt goodbyes. No, no ghetto, this!

I can remember winters beside the stove,
With often no fuel, and yet I thought it was burning,
A Past springing up like a meadow in a frame of ice—
No sheep. No dog. No shepherd.
Only grass and the sunlight warmly falling
Like a rationalization all would end—
A Past familiar in the knowledge it was not my own,
And yet, who else could possibly have thought it?
I thought of *das Massenunbewusstsein*—

All that occurred was a falling-away of the ice:
A meadow suspended in the air, a powder-puff,
Enormous, tremulant, moving with my hand.
Brushing the stove, I would burn my hand.

Yes, it's too bad I can't write of death,
But only dying . . . *So much material* and
How you have suffered! they tell me . . .
The swastika, inviolate through soot and grime,
Betrays me. I live, the witness of my
Trick with life.

For a while, I attended funerals . . .
But they only recalled those lives I never knew.
I could see the corpses squirming in their coffins.
In time, I felt it sacrilege—I!
I who had never seen my parents' graves,
Nor truly could have sworn they had them, or were dead!
I who had not died, but felt buried through and through!

Crouched among the want-ads, thinking of a totem,
I would suddenly smile, as though my face exploded;
A coded giggle would jig in the musty air:
Wildest of the world's absurdest warnings:
"Here I am . . . *ja-ja!* yes-yes! yeah-yeah! . . ."
I would skip to the mirror, fawn, my face drawn pale;
Turn away, feeling surely I'd left
The painted leer of a savage there!
"You are the race of one," the clock would say,
"You can never be extinguished, *Liebchen* . . . never fear . . ."

I can remember, as though it were today,
Walking to that park, placing my hand on a tree,
Testing the weight of a stone, rubbing the sweat
From my lids in middle-winter, all these Data
That remind me of them, *only of them!*—
I can remember them clearly, as from
A lack of oppression: it was like
Touching, feeling the texture, twisting
My own death, unseverely.

Hide-and-Seek

Huddled at the oak
(Put there, surely)
Wishing strength and its wild
Knack of disguise, in the face of
All (why, Papa!), your fists
Clenched to your face (caught
In Her cupboards, you would
Catch it, mouse!); your lids
Sealed, eyes exploding worlds,
Caked mud finds your fingers
Tingling, they are You, will
Show (this is not hiding!), you
Count to nine out loud (see,
You are not cheating!) then by quarters
Till you are hidden . . .

Ten! —
He has not touched you . . .
If you really hide and not peek, he
Will not hurt you. Bravely
You walked to the tree, letting him
Know you knew how to hide
(Big boy, now there!) then
Boy brushed your knee, saying:
"You're hiding, Puppyluck, you don't
Have to seek—hiding, how
Can one seek!" Let him! you thought,
Just let him—

Your fists
Sweat (those knives . . . those pockets . . .)
The mud touches your lip. Rocks
And pieces of wood, a sally, poke
In your pocket: who moved! You
Were so still! You open your eyes . . .
It is getting dark. What will he do
If he finds you! Run through the woods.
Where? Mama?

As you
Round the trunk, he grabs you—
Oh! oh! up to the sky! Moon shrugs
And stars titter. "See, little fellow,
I found you!" (Yes, Papa, but I
Was hiding . . .)

Oak after oak through the dusk.
But you are not there.

Home, he leans by the fire, gazing;
Then rests his head in his hands,
As if he had not seen you. He is
Hiding, you think, yes now he is
Hiding, but how can I find—

DONALD JUSTICE:

Song

First was not,
Became a spot,
Then through and in
Felt heart begin,
And learning size
Nor needed eyes,
Yet colors grew
(Began with blue),
Nor ears yet felt
The silence melt,
Till wanting room
Broke through the womb,
From one with Mother
Became Another,
Began to cry
Am I! Am I!

Prayer

Forgive, Satan, virtue's pedants, all such
As have broken our habits, or had none,
The keepers of promises, prize-winners,
Meek as leaves in the wind's circus, evenings;
Our simple wish to be elsewhere forgive,
Shy touchers of library atlases,
Envious of bird-flight, the whale's submersion;
And us forgive who have forgotten how,
The melancholy, who, lacing a shoe,
Choose not to continue, the merely bored,
Who have modelled our lives after cloud-shapes;
For which confessing have mercy on us,
The different and the indifferent,
In inverse proportion to our merit,
For we have affirmed Thee openly, by
Candle-glint in the polish of silver,
Between courses, murmured amenities,
Seen Thee in mirrors by morning, shaving,
Or head in loose curls on the next pillow,
Reduced Thee to our own scope and purpose,
Satan, who, though in heaven, downward yearned,
As the butterfly, weary of flowers,
Longs for the cocoon, or the looping net.

HERBERT MORRIS:

Father

Because he was there then with them watching
him shine the car as she
sat on a box while Toy ran
leashless (and I had not caught the
sun's spears on a car's mute metal, nor
the letters in their blue ink driven

within all wood's splintered texture of
grain), sunken in Sunday the
street, neighbors, he thought, gone because
of picnics, and so the doors closed and
the gates (if there are gates, Father) locked
and the blinds tight; because he was
there in the back with day but
a murmur, hearing the water's
force through the hose and its touching
with the car as two things
touch, and the sun (though I do not
know) surging the back's stone walk and
the dry small grass bordering: because

(inside, keys yellow but dusk too
deepens and always is. The
music in other places, not
with the boulevard's leaves and
the lights of cars among them, not
here. I saw it
imaged in the street's waters swarming
each dusk's swell past the velours
drapes into the rooms, and I was
sad and so silent in such
holding, sunken and some candles
lighting the soaked sands, but
dark. Inside, keys yellow.)

he was there then with them watching
Max shine the car as Ida
sat on a box while Toy ran
leashless, street silent in the doors closed and
the gates (if there are gates, Father) locked
and the blinds tight, they in the
back, I am not of him.

WILLIAM EASTLAKE:

Little Joe

I think we all realized that nothing, nothing at all, would ever stop Little Joe; not the drought even, because he, or his father Jonathan rather, had thought of it, but Joe executed it—the damming up of the small spring above Rye Hill, so that they had at least one crop (the oats below) when no other farmer had anything except the orchard crop; nor the mortgage foreclosure when Little Joe took his turn with the rifle because his father couldn't stay awake all the time to fend off the sheriff (who never arrived, however, because the bank had good farms coming out of its ears). It was certainly too the same madness that carried Little Joe over into helping Jonathan make a crop. They starved themselves by not selling the seed grain—planting a crop that there was no market for out of that identical madness, or maybe frenzy to work, or ornery habit, or perhaps the dark fear of thinking as the other farmers thought, knotting idle around Ferber's Grain and Storage and thinking. Harvested the crop and sold it to the government, something the thinking farmers had never thought of—never thought that some wild-eyed Biblical schemer in Washington would buy it to bury. And always Little Joe plunged right on figuring and running and investigating, and when he wasn't figuring and running and investigating—he was hiding.

Little Joe couldn't stand people. I remember one time clearly when we went to visit his family. Not that we ever had anything especially to say to our neighbors, but Father thought we should make something especially to say to them, that we should "contrive our piece of the world into something less of a wheated jungle." So on Sunday we went to see them and Joe was hiding. "He has been hiding ever since the dark night," Jonathan said. We all knew that he had been hiding before that. But that he had had particular reason to hide since the dark night was probably true. The "dark night" was the day we went underground, or the day Little Joe came out from underneath the rock.

We were all up in Charlie Peacock's tree house when we saw him come out from underneath the rock, but it wasn't until he passed close by us that we could tell it was Little Joe. "Where did you come

from, Little Joe?" Gregory asked in a shout that is never so much a question with children as a challenge.

Little Joe swung his large head away from up at the tree and over to the rock as though checking certain that our point of vantage had not exposed his secret and that our question was only a challenge.

"Where did you come from, Little Joe?"

Little Joe took off into the swamp. We got down from the tree and followed him in. Little Joe had not taken off into the swamp in the manner of someone in flight but as though it were an old direction, a path to some other house or meeting-place of swamp-walkers, instead of a pathless ooze and suck, bayoneted with cattails and sword grass, circling without itself, endless because it began again without stopping after the river, which wasn't a river even here although it had channels that bled through the swamp with secret depths plumbed now by Gregory as he shot in head first and all the rest of us in after him except that we got tangled in razor brush and freed ourselves only in time to lift him out and set him on a bog. "There he goes," Gregory said, and following the turn of Gregory's head we saw through the reeds Little Joe's rear vanish down the hole he had come out of. When we got back to the hole Charlie Peacock went in first. Charlie Peacock came out again quick and said that it was so dark he couldn't see a damn thing and he wanted me to go in and then Eddie Markowitz and before they got to Gregory or Pete Nelson they said we shouldn't ought to go in without a light and before they got back to me again I said here goes the Crip and I went in.

It was much darker than Charlie Peacock said it was; that is, when you went in through a bush that hid the opening you made a quick double turn and even with that, without any doors or anything, you expected something more than absolute blackness. Then I saw a scratch of light, but surrounded by so much darkness I did not know for sure where I was, and yet it was already too late to turn back because after the first few steps I did not know which way was back and could only make towards the light that rose now and fell like some soft breathing flame, but it got all its quiet shock from the fact that every step in the now seeming floating world was a step that brought me that much nearer to Little Joe.

"Keep coming, Crip." It was Little Joe's voice, a low-pitched rasp.

"Okay, stop, Crip. You've gone far enough, Crip."

At once the light seemed to settle. It appeared to be about ten feet in front and then the face of Little Joe came into it.

"Maybe we've gone too far. That's what we've got to investigate. Be nonchalant, Crip."

Little Joe had other big words than nonchalant. He had fructify, vainglorious, persiflage, nonpareil, de trop and the Hanseatic League. He had more big words too, most of which he got from the commercials, but some he got from the Negro couple who were the cooks at the grange hall, Goldie and Gilmore; for example he had conjointly and copesetic.

"Are you here conjointly with others?" Little Joe's head cast no shadow nor did it appear to be attached to anything. It swayed in the light as though moved from above by strings that matched the darkness.

"I repeat, are you here conjointly with others? You'll have to answer that question."

"I'm conjointly here with others," I answered.

"You'll have to name names. Now whose idea was it to track me?"

A thumb and forefinger rose to the light and snuffed at it. Gasps of total darkness came and went.

"It wasn't nobody's idea," I said.

"I'll put that name down. Edward Markowitz."

"If you're going to put a name down put my name down."

"It doesn't make any difference. If you know him that makes you just as guilty."

There was a pause now, the light yellow, flickering Joe's mouth against his upper face.

"Do you think I'm being unfair?" he said.

"I think you're being nuts."

Little Joe moved the light so that it went over to the side of his face.

"We will have no more persiflage," he said, "or I will have to put out the light. I don't want any more redundancies and it's not me who's nuts. I never followed anybody down into a dark sewer."

"So it's a sewer, is it?"

"It's a kind of a sewer," Little Joe said. "But that's redundant. Will you or will you not answer the question before us?"

"I don't remember what the question is that is before us."

"Listen, my boy," Little Joe said finally, looking at me carefully now, "you don't have to remember the question because I am going to take care of you. Now come on over here and sit down."

I walked over beside the light and my knee touched something hard.

"Sit down there," Little Joe said.

I sat down on something cold.

"You wait," Little Joe said. "They'll be down and we'll find out what they're up to."

"I know what they're up to. They're not up to nothing."

"Wait till I get all the evidence and then make up your mind," Little Joe said. "You can know people all your life and not know what they're up to without knowing the evidence."

"Why do you want to know the evidence, Little Joe?"

"Because I want to have a lot of friends," Little Joe said. "And these people don't like me."

We stared out, both of us, through the yellow light that I could see now was a candle. The place had a smell like the kind of a smell you get when you put a fire out suddenly with water, more of a stench than a smell, and sharp.

"Are you going to make friends by giving the tree house boys a bad time, Little Joe?"

"They don't like me," Little Joe said. His words echoed back off some hard invisible wall.

"Why don't the boys in the tree house like you, Little Joe?"

"Well, for one thing—" Little Joe hesitated, his boy face suddenly aged and yellow in the unfair light. "For one thing I guess it's because I don't believe in known sayings."

"Well, I don't necessarily believe in known sayings myself," I said.

"Just name me one known saying you don't believe in," Little Joe said, confident.

I thought a while, even putting my hands against my head and thinking, but I couldn't think of one that wasn't perfect. I thought some more, testing many of them, but I couldn't find a hole in a single one of them. Then I even got to thinking about So Is Your Old Man and Yes We Have No Bananas which were almost known sayings at that time, and then I got to thinking what I was doing thinking at all when I didn't even know where I was except underground some place, and I got scared.

"See, you believe in all the known sayings," Little Joe said, touching me kind of clammy, and I must have moved.

"For example what known sayings don't you believe in?" I said suddenly, I guess to keep him from touching me.

"I hate them all," Little Joe said.

"For example," I said, as though saying something would keep him away, "do you hate Sink Or Swim, Paddle Your Own Canoe, Do Or Die, Survive Or Perish, Tom The Bootblack, Phil The Fiddler, From Canal Boy To President?"

"They're not known sayings," Little Joe said, patient again. "But I will tell you I hate them anyway— Hold it. I think the others are coming and I want you to do as you said you would."

"What did I say I would?"

"We must be very quiet," Little Joe said, hushed and over-gentle.

They had evidently decided to come down all at once. You could hear them fumbling in the darkness. If not encouraged by leadership or sense of direction they shared a togetherness of ignorance, groping toward the yellow spume of light in the perfect blackness, seeming, as it had seemed to me, to be set against nothing and coming from nowhere; this joined now by the stench of the cave, sour and acrid, permeating, and finally by the voice of Little Joe.

"Which one is Paris France?"

They seemed not only to stop out there in the darkness but to bunch up like a herd of cows caught breaking into a corn field, their leader, or the one most in advance, or the one nearest the hired hand, belted by a pitchfork across the nose, the rest not retreating, quiet, puzzled, their legs and eyes abruptly frozen in movement, their bodies hanging awkward—like sometimes when a moving picture stops and you think the cameraman is going to run the film backwards.

"I repeat, which one is Paris France?"

"I guess that's me."

Little Joe shook his head, shadowless in the pallid light, amused and tolerant and still patient.

"You guess that's you. Don't you know? Do you use other names? What are they?"

"John Joplin."

"And what is your real name?"

"I guess John Joplin is my real name."

"Why do you use the foreign name of Paris France?"

"Because the kids started calling me that."

"Why did they start calling you that?"

"I guess because when we were standing around saying what we wanted to be when we grew up someone wanted to be a fireman and I wanted to go to Paris France."

'Why did you want to go to Paris France?"

"Because I had a fight with my mother."

"And do you expect us to believe that? Why, you must think we're vapid. Why did you have a fight with your mother?"

"Because she told me never to see you again. She said you were a creep and I said maybe you were a creep but I—"

"But you admit you had a fight with your mother?"

"Yes."

"Well, I don't think we have much respect for this witness. You may step back. Now will an Edward Markowitz step forward and be sure you don't slip in the four-hundred-foot hole. Now, Edward Markowitz, a man sitting here alongside of me who used to be one of you has made what you'd call a kind of statement. In this statement he named names and he named you. He said that you—"

"Wait a minute," I said. "Wait a minute. I nev—"

"That hole," Little Joe whispered over to me huskily. "That four-hundred-foot hole I was talking about ain't alongside them. It's right alongside you. I'd advise—"

"Wait a minute," I said, and looked out into the darkness where the others must be. "This four-hundred-foot hole he's been talking about, now he says it's over by me. He's just threatening us. I don't think it exists."

There was a mutter of voices from the invisible group and I felt encouraged. Then Little Joe said in Little Joe's voice, "If it doesn't exist then all of you take one step forward."

No one took the step forward, least of all me.

"Very well," Little Joe said. "Now that we have established the bravery I will tell you how smart you are. There may be four-hundred-foot holes four hundred feet deep. They may be here, they may be there. I don't know. I only know there is a certain way out where there are no holes and if you go along with me I will lead you to the light. Now if you would all repeat after me what I say, I would appreciate it very much. Little Joe is the Leader."

It seemed only two people repeated it after him—Pete Nelson was one, maybe Charlie Peacock, I wasn't sure or interested.

"Now, you can all do better than that," Little Joe said, friendly and very patient. "Now, if we try it again and get it right maybe we can get it over with and we won't have to spend our life down here. Now once again— Little Joe is the Leader."

"Little Joe is the Leader," they all said.

"I notice you didn't say it," Little Joe said, turning his head, the pale light yellow and faltering, catching only the highlights so that his face seemed an image thrown against nothing by a magic lantern using negatives.

I didn't answer anything and Little Joe went on without changing tone: "You're a very brave boy, still that's why you're on my team."

I still couldn't say anything.

"You were brave enough to inform on an Edward Markowitz."

"I didn't squeal on Eddie," I said. "And I'm not on your team."

"Then you would rather be at the bottom of a four-hundred-foot hole. Okay, if that is the way you choose to want it."

The yellow candle moved toward me followed by the face that was more a mask (not the gaudy kind you buy at the five-and-dime for Hallowe'en but colorless, self-made), that wavered and then came on again toward me.

"Don't push the Crip."

The face stopped and turned with the candle toward the invisible speaker. It was Eddie.

"Maybe I didn't hear you rightly," Little Joe said carefully into the darkness toward the voice. "But if I understood your meaning you want to wind up at the bottom of that hole yourself."

"I just said don't push a crip."

The yellow light was slowly put down again.

"Let me get this clear," Little Joe said with the old patience. "Did you get that out of a book? It's important to know where you got it. Not pushing a crip could be a good thing in most every instance. Now just let me know where you got it."

"None of your business," Eddie said.

"Oh," Little Joe said, pleased, the mask coming into a smile but the ends of the mouth still not turning up. "Oh, in that case I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to take one step forward." The voice was dead again and tired.

"I'm not taking any step anyplace."

"Very well, then. If you don't want to help the Crip, if you won't cooperate, then we'll have to finish this business."

The light and face came toward me and then almost at once there was a massed movement in the darkness. Little Joe stopped. "The four-hundred-foot hole," he said toward them, but the movement continued, gaining confidence now; and then almost gently in the weak light at the edge of the darkness the faces began to gather close to Little Joe.

"Very well," Little Joe said, threatened, without any movement of the face at all. "If that's the way you have to have it, if you think you can escape this darkness yourselves, if you don't think you need a light to show you the way, if you people think you can make it alone when it is only me who understands the darkness, all right then, let us see what you won't see."

Then Little Joe made a heavy pass with his bear-like arm toward the weak light and everything went black. You could sense now only the great underground stench and the solid silence that tensed us all.

"Yes. Maybe you don't need me at all to get out of the darkness. Maybe prayer will do it." The voice was confident and smooth now in the blackness. It had even lost its straining patience as though in pitting himself against God he would forego all that; as though he could perform finally within a situation where the two of them were equal. "You can pray or take a vote."

"You think maybe he has gone nuts?" It was the voice of Pete Nelson, low and intimate.

"No, it's Little Joe's own normal self," Paris France said.

"Anyway," and I think this was the voice of Gregory now, "I think maybe taking a vote is a good idea. We got to try finding our way out of here without getting killed and I think we should find out who is going to be the leader. If we don't have a leader some of us are bound never to get out of here."

"All right," I said, wanting to get moving. "When I call out your names you tell me who you want to be leader and Eddie will keep count."

"Before you vote," Little Joe's voice commanded from nowhere, "I want to warn you that no one knows how to get out of here except me. You followed me down and now your only chance to be saved is to stick with me."

"All right," I said. "No more speeches. Let's get the vote over with. Charlie Peacock, how do you vote?"

"I guess I vote for Little Joe. He's the only one who seems to know his way around down here."

And so did all the others, including, when it came my turn, myself. I guess we all reckoned there was no alternative now that we had played his game and gotten ourselves down here.

"All right," Little Joe said. "But if I am going to accept this candidature or whatever, I have got to have some concommitments as to what you people have been up to."

"I hope that's not a sequitur," Paris France said, topping Little Joe's word.

"It's a question," Little Joe said. "And I want an answer yes or no."

"But how can I give the answer if I don't know the question?"

"It's easy," Little Joe said. "Just say what I tell you to. Now try this: Little Joe is—"

But that was the end of his first empire. While Little Joe was being

carried away by the sound of his own election Charlie Peacock had figured where the voice was coming from and snuck around in back of him and was twisting his arm up as though to break it if Little Joe didn't quit.

Little Joe quit and he led us out, in his pain, up to the real light. We sat Little Joe down in the middle of us beneath the tree house to have a careful look at him.

"I won the election fair and square," Little Joe said. "You didn't play it fair."

Little Joe lay curled up in front of us like some cornered thing, fearing to move as though movement might set off some chain of something which he was now unable to stop.

"Like something that crawls out alive, white, when you turn over a rotten log," Gregory said, reaching forward to touch Little Joe with his foot.

"Okay, okay, okay," Little Joe said. "But you never gave me a chance."

"What do you mean we never gave you a chance?" Eddie said.

"Never gave me a chance to help with the tree house or nothing."

"Maybe he's got a point," Paris France said. "You can't tell, maybe he's got a point."

"I don't think he ever had a point," Gregory said. "But we'll go up in the tree house and take a vote."

We were always going up in the tree house to vote on something. I don't think there was anything we didn't vote on in the tree house. We voted on who was going to carry the secrets down; we voted where to bury the old treasure and where to dig for the new, the rules for cheating at marbles and who was the shortest and the tallest and the fattest and the most likely to succeed in cutting off all his own hair.

"Me first," Little Joe said, unwinding and waddling over to the ladder.

"No, you last," Gregory said, pushing him to one side. Gregory went up first, then Eddie, then Paris France, Charlie Peacock, and me last, not because it was my position in the pecking order but because I had to pull the right leg after me, which made me slow. I got ready to go up, and Gregory hollered from way atop the tree, "Wait a minute—you make Little Joe come up first."

"He says you promised him he could go up last," I hollered back up.

"I changed my mind," Gregory's voice rang around the forest.

"He says that your decision—" I called and then paused to confer

with Little Joe on one of his words. "He says your decision is arbitrary and should be put to a vote of the others."

There was a silence from above and Little Joe hollered up, "Hear this before you vote—you still don't know your way around down there. If you don't stick to your promise that you promised me maybe you never will."

The dead silence continued from way up in the tree. I looked up. The great pine, stripped of its branches and plumed with the thatched roof of the house, appeared palmlike, tropical, a stalk, naked and queer in the dark north.

"Okay," Gregory shouted down at last. "How do you vote?"

"I think I vote to put him on his honor and let him go last."

"Okay, that does it," Gregory shouted. "You better come up."

I started crawling up the pine-barked and poplar-runged ladder, making it slowly and pulling the bad leg after me. At the top the ladder began to vibrate and then thump, and if Paris France had not reached down and grabbed me I would have gone spinning down with the ladder.

Little Joe ran and jumped until it crashed, then he waddled back and solemnly, down to the last recognizable rung, destroyed our freedom with a great rock that seemed, as he lifted it over his antic body, larger than he was.

"Little Joe!" Charlie Peacock called, and then he called again, "Little Joe!"—each time the cry becoming more feeble because Little Joe had already gone, disappeared below again with all our secrets and treasures and maybe even rules and certainly all that we had that passed for confidence in our fellow Indians.

We all stood there teetering on the edge of our stalk-borne house raft in the now sunless sky almost one hundred feet above the soft black floor of the forest. We had carefully sheared off the branches so that the stumps would give no purchase to our enemies—the Moors and the Saracens, the Sioux, Blackfeet, and Crow.

We sailed on in the sky, seeming to have actual movement now, as though the sun westering not only brought the rawness of the night but also had left us without stability; cut off from the earth, we joined the movement of the beginning stars. As it grew darker, we shouted for a time, our voices skimming across the trees which with the blackness beneath us now seemed part of our new ocean, their big dark tops emerging and rolling softly like our raft.

At about midnight there was the noise of rough father voices be-

neath us, then the grunting and swearing of ladders being erected. We were informed that Little Joe had saved us, that we had invaded his tunnel and tried to force him into our house, but that in spite of this he had saved us. And four days later, which in our child's world could be four years, he still insisted he would save us again if the opportunity presented itself—and again and again and again. He would go on saving us, he said carefully across the desk-topped classroom silence to Charlie Peacock, until we were all dead.

SARA KING CARLETON:

Summer Guests

They are there on the long porch, sitting,
knitting,
watching each other slyly, talking,
noticing who is there, who has gone walking.

Envy is eating the heart of everyone.

The rooms upstairs are empty,
all the humming
is downstairs; thunder is coming.

Lightning flickers the horizon.

Do not come back, lovers,
till darkness covers
the steps to the porch door,
till leaves blow in on the floor;

till the rocking chairs are stacked in the front hall
and the dinner bell sounds no more at all.

Do not come back, lovers, till summer heat
is dry, dead dust, till storms beat
down the grass, till the knitters go . . .
till snow.

SHEILA PRITCHARD:

In All the Days of the Dunes

On the beach, plow-rich with agate's intricate cunning
sweeps the soundless pendulum. Nymphs running
leap to the easy water, plucking fun

from the scoured sands, out of the animate reeds,
cajoling the sun for masks, offering seeds,
teasing, appeasing, squeezing the day for needs.

Baskets filled with lotion and luncheon, and children
fulfilling the motion of lake to the land,
the limitless arc rising, lashing and laving
the fluid earth poured from the juvenile springs.
The whole spinning prism elected, deflected
by strokes of the pendulum kissing the dunes . . .

"Boy lost" — the stalled echo drifts down the beach
falling to freeze the pursuers, the nymphs. Each
gazes at reference, uneasily framed within reach.

The dancing lifeguard clasping strangers' hands
fashions a human chain to fence the sand,
and, wading lakeward, chase the evading land.

It is not enough, to expostulate the dead
and let a decent wave cover the evidence,
permit the neat bones rest some morning
mute before the immensity of the dunes,
their carpet strewn with delicate shells
the lake coughed up after a night of feasting . . .

Warily the lucky one, plucking each foot
rooted in agate, high-swings his toes to put
anguished steps, letting each step be look.

No time to murmur the mother, nor mourn the boy.
No time to do more than discover, recover a toy,
pick out the victim unnamed, reclaimed from the bay.

As rising up from under glass
plow-sick, the furrows burst apart,
reveal the sand-rubbed boy,
the chain breaks, severed by sacrament.
Oblation bent, a sacrifice is spent.
The pendulum sweeps on. No day
more calm in all the days of the dunes.

JEANNIE DIXON:

For Bernal

The man who died in the forest left his senses
among the tool and arrow artifacts:
his harking ear the edge of a chipped ax,
his watching eye in the water's siliceous lenses.

That confused ear hears the forest gone insane—
cracking its nightlong joints; the stemware hoof
set friable on earth, and on his roof
the fingertap scherzo of squirrels beneath rain.

Yells of coyotes catapult desire,
bounce the wish from ridgy rock to rock.
With nerves of flint he hears asylum talk,
the dull ideas of water in the fire.

From riffles babbling in the moon he sees
heads of beasts with fingers all outthrust
and eyes like flashlights turning in dark's dust,
vines of smoke splitting smokestack trees.

His eye dances, rolls to vertigo birds,
clicks to verdigris snakes wound in his path.

His heart is fishes' fins in a shallow swath,
his brain a meadow of head-on herds.

For the man who died in the forest the dead man grieves,
knows something shaping planets out of leaves.

SANDRA WOOL:

'My heart-strings tuned for plucking are'

o plays she-wench the lute of harpsiCAL
or doth she sit with folded hands;
I like my trouncing trollops musiCAL
and versed in the sharp's demands

o gambades the maid with the help of a blade;
or doth she lisp to her sisters
"I'd rather be home, and not
be clombe"
even if it is the first of May

o doth she sing sweetly madrigals
to lyrical by her lonesome hours,
or doth she sit,
and manufacture handkerCHIF
to greed pennies from artificial flowers

o pander, pick me a mistress
who sings or pings or prances a score
for it is music I address my love
and polyphony is her chore

I think I'd have her handsome;
and honey-pot and true;
but, pander, most of all, pick me a mistress
who measures time as I do

RAYMOND RADIGUET:

Two Poems and a Tale

Translated by William Jay Smith

The Language of Flowers or Stars

I lived for some time in a house where there were twelve young girls who resembled the months of the year. I could dance with them, but that was my only privilege; I was even forbidden to speak. One rainy day, to avenge myself, I offered each one flowers I had brought back from my walk. Some of them comprehended. After their death, I disguised myself as a bandit to frighten the others. They purposely took no notice. In summer we all went out walking, and each of us counted the stars. When I found one too many, I said nothing.

Can it be that the rainy days have passed, and the sky is closed again? Your ear is not quick enough to catch the sound.

To a Nude Walking

Model yourself upon the hill
That is pregnant with the grape.
She might also be content
To wear nothing but vine-leaves.

And yet with grassy shawl
And fur-piece of the thicket,
With headdress and muff of thyme
Where hidden rabbits frolic,

She costumes her beauty.
—And you, extravagant coquette,
Clothed only in your flesh,
April, you think it's summer!

The Flower Girl

Everyone still remembers under what mysterious circumstances a swan was once stolen from the zoo. Cabaret singers at the time insinuated that the theft was the result of the price of poultry, and a Socialist deputy took advantage of the occasion to attack the government. But the public refused to admit that there was not some extraordinary motive behind so unusual a theft.

The zoo-keepers all knew little Aline, the flower girl, who, when her generous clients rid her of her burden of violets and mimosa, would run to one of those multicolored stalls, those childhood paradises.

Aline did not carelessly distribute the rolls she bought to fill her apron. She would willingly have taken her dainty meal with her favorite swan, but he was too proud to invite her. As soon as the flower girl's apron was empty, her peculiar favorite would bid the innocent young thing farewell.

Such manners on the part of so majestic a bird might seem surprising to anyone who has not read romances of chivalry, in which it is by no means uncommon for a lovely lady to provide for her knight.

Aline lived on the fifth floor of a rather disreputable hotel. Her exemplary conduct was a subject of continual amazement to the other women who lived there.

"At the age of fourteen," they said, "we had other things to do than sell flowers."

On the wall of Aline's room hung a color print showing Leda seduced by Jupiter. Unacquainted with the classical story and seeing in Leda only a rival for her swan's affections, she would look at it indignantly, saying: "What an ungrateful wretch!"

One evening in a fit of anger she tore up the print. The next day she felt she noticed a reproach in the eyes of her swan.

"Why are you jealous?" he seemed to be asking. "My affair with Leda is ancient history."

The fashion of wearing flowers in one's buttonhole returned; Aline got rich very, very quickly, and rented a comfortable apartment in a nice section of town.

Aline was now earning enough to support two. So she wrote to the director of the zoo and proposed to buy the swan. But postmen being what they are, the letter went astray, and she got no answer.

She had always been honest. You can imagine with what trepidation she kidnapped her loved one one day at closing time. Since he

was quite intelligent, he refrained from singing: he knew that Aline did not want him to die . . .

They both arrived safely at the door of her dwelling, where the swan was installed in the bathtub. And the little girl no longer envied other children the swans in their baths. The only difference was that hers was not made of celluloid—it was real.

WILLIAM JAY SMITH:

A Note on Radiguet

In the poems of that young genius, Raymond Radiguet, one finds the same qualities of disarming candor, quiet, penetrating vision, and cool self-possession that have made his novels famous. He seems to have had from the very beginning a strong sense of the deepest classical tradition in French literature: his model in prose was Mme. de Lafayette, author of the most classical of French novels, *La Princesse de Clèves;* his models in poetry were Ronsard, Malherbe, La Fontaine. Radiguet could lay claim also to the sure, unfettered brilliance of youth. He died in 1923 at the age of twenty; all his poems were written between 1917 and 1921, between the ages of fourteen and eighteen.

"The Language of Flowers or Stars," one of his earliest works, sets down so modestly the awakening of the senses that the poem almost passes us by. The words evoke such a still, breathless atmosphere that they seem to communicate without being spoken. There is in these lines something shimmering, fresh, and resonant. It is as if a child had made some astonishing pronouncement without quite realizing the depths to which he had reached. "To a Nude Walking," which resembles one of the songs of Ronsard, has all the directness, the classical control the writer admired: "Racine, at first, seems less audacious than Rimbaud. The daring of Racine is simply more refined than that of Rimbaud, for it pushes modesty to the point of going completely unnoticed."

It is perhaps significant that Radiguet, in "The Language of Flowers or Stars," should, in a sense, have domesticated the months of the year. To the very young the domestic scene possesses mythical

dimensions which it loses as one grows older: beasts sleep in the child's bed, knights breakfast at his table, the fabulous is everywhere around him. And so it is that classical myths come to life again and again in terms of the ordinary and everyday. Radiguet sought out banality in order to come to terms with it, to raise it to the power of dream. "The striving for banality," he wrote, "will ward off strangeness, which is always detestable. That queerness which spoils much of Rimbaud one never finds in Ronsard." "The Flower Girl" is the tale of Leda and the Swan in reverse: the Swan is abducted, the heavenly creature made at home. The world of the Swan is the limitless realm of adventure; its reality is supplied by the child's vision, it is fed as the Swan is fed. If the celluloid toy lives and breathes, it does so through the child's sense of play, a faculty which in the adult becomes the freedom of the imagination. With Radiguet, on the edge of adulthood, play and imagination are interlocked in a very remarkable fashion. This rare combination lies behind the peculiar understatement and wit of this early sketch; it gives it the same luminous quality one remarks in the author's more important work.

Raymond Radiguet was aware that more than the record of a youthful heartbeat is demanded of writing for it to live. On the subject of the young writer, he said: "It is a commonplace, and consequently an inescapable truth that to write one must have lived. But what I would like to know is at what age one has the right to say: 'I have lived.' Does not this simple past logically imply death? For my part, I believe that at any age, and at the very earliest age, one has both lived and begun to live. However that may be, it does not seem to me impertinent to lay claim to the right of utilizing one's memories of one's first years before one's last memories have arrived. Not that we condemn the powerful charm there is in speaking of dawn on the evening of a fine day, but different as it is, the interest is no less in speaking of it without waiting for night."

Radiguet did not wait for night. He spoke of the dawn, but he had what great writers, young or old, possess: the vision of the whole day, which is life.

H. C. MORRIS:

Crane's 'Voyages' as a Single Poem

"Besides working on parts of my *Bridge,* I'm engaged in writing a series of six sea poems called 'Voyages.'" This passage from a letter Hart Crane wrote to his mother in November, 1924, makes it clear that, despite the earlier existence of at least three of the "Voyages" as separate poems somewhat differing from the final versions*, Crane had come to regard the six poems as a sequence. Yet, except in *White Buildings* (1926) and the *Collected Poems,* the six are never presented as a single work, anthologists being content to reprint "Voyages II" and, frequently, "Voyages VI." Moreover, few critics have suggested that the sequence be studied as an integrated work. In Philip Horton's biography of Crane, the "Voyages" are called the poet's most solid achievement. Waldo Frank, in the introduction to the *Collected Poems,* prints something more than five stanzas from the various parts of the "Voyages" without a break in order to show that Crane has obtained a synthesis through "the symbolic use of the sea"; but Frank fails to explain that synthesis or examine it closely.

It is the purpose of this essay, therefore, to demonstrate that the sections of the "Voyages" *do* make up a single long poem, and that Crane has achieved unification through not only thematic but also grammatical devices. It is easily seen that the theme which interweaves love, sea, voyage, and death continues throughout; what is not so easily seen is that syntax, language, and symbol bind these elements in a continuous approach.

Parts I and II introduce, through contrast, the twofold nature of the sea symbol as Crane uses it in the series. The sea symbolizes, paradoxically, both love and death. While in "Voyages I" the sea is cruel, in "Voyages II" the sea "rends / . . . All but the pieties of lovers' hands."

The first stanza of "Voyages II" is a fragment:

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* "Voyages I" had appeared under the title "The Bottom of the Sea Is Cruel" in *Secession* in 1923. "Voyages III" is a revision of "Sonnet," which Crane enclosed in a letter to Waldo Frank in April, 1924. "Voyages VI" is a revision of "Belle Isle," written in January-February, 1923. "Sonnet" and "Belle Isle" may be read in Appendix A (Uncollected Poetry) in Brom Weber's *Hart Crane* (1948).

> And yet this great wink of eternity,
> Of rimless floods, unfettered leewardings,
> Samite sheeted and processioned where
> Her undinal vast belly moonward bends,
> Laughing the wrapt inflections of our love.

It has been noted that the stanza begins with the double conjunction "And yet"; Drew and Sweeney, in *Directions in Modern Poetry,* suggest Crane used this syntax to establish "obliquely the idea of the eternal continuity of the sea's being." Without rejecting this reading, I think that Crane also meant this stanza to pick up immediately after the last line of "Voyages I." One needs only to add the obvious "Here is" to illustrate both the continuity and the contrast: "The bottom of the sea is cruel./ And yet [here is] this great wink of eternity . . . ."

The changes are rung on this twofold symbol throughout the entire poem. The love and death elements constantly separate and merge; if the sea at one moment seems kind, in the next "sleep, death, desire,/ Close round one instant in one floating flower."

The continuity of the "Voyages" can be demonstrated further by pointing out that all the parts are in direct address to a lover. It is well known by now that the lover was a young sailor with whom Crane lived for a time in his apartment in Brooklyn, the apartment which lay in the shadow of Brooklyn Bridge. It was after looking out of one of the windows of his apartment that Crane could write to Waldo Frank, "I think the sea has thrown itself upon me and been answered, at least in part, and I believe I am a little changed—not essentially, but changed and transubstantiated as anyone is who has asked a question and been answered." Crane writes of the sea, even in the prose of a letter to a friend, in the same way he writes of it in the "Voyages." The sea is the agent which symbolizes his love, and yet in some mystic fashion the sea is also the lover.

Allen Tate has pointed out in his preface to *White Buildings* that the theme of the "Voyages" is oblique, having been "formulated through a complex series of metaphors"; he says that the meaning of the poem is implicit rather than explicit. Yet a certain degree of explicitness can be reached if we can expose the compressed syntax of the "Voyages."

While on one level the voyage being made is the abstract voyage of the lover to his beloved, on another, a literal voyage is also being made. The beloved is apostrophized because he is away on a sea trip. Ever since Philip Horton suggested that the "bells off San Salvador" represent the bells of a city which legend tells had sunk off the coast

of San Salvador, critics have not bothered to read the line in any other way (See the notes on the poem in Friar and Brinnin's *Modern Poetry*). It seems to me, however, the bells might just as easily be on the ship which carries the poet's beloved closer. After all, we have Crane's own explanation of the phrase "Adagios of islands" to indicate that "the reference is to the motion of a boat through islands clustered thickly." This is the boat on which the beloved voyages.

A series of imperatives is delivered to the wanderer—"O my Prodigal":

> Complete the dark confessions her veins spell.
>
> Mark how her turning shoulders wind the hours,
> And hasten while her penniless rich palms
> Pass superscription of bent foam and wave,—
> Hasten, while they are true,—

The sea as love agent threatens to turn into the sea as death agent: Hasten back to me before the sea's palms become untrue, failing to bear you up any longer, and before "sleep, death, desire,/ Close round one instant in one floating flower."

A contrast may be seen also in the treatment of "Voyages II" and "Voyages III"; while the literal movement in "Voyages II" is that of the beloved to the lover on shore, the mystical movement of "Voyages III" is that of the *soul* of the lover to his *possibly* dead beloved on the sea bottom. The sea in "Voyages III" is a variation of the cruel sea in "Voyages I," and the movement of the various parts of the "Voyages" swells from the sea as love to the sea as death in imitation of the ocean itself.

Once again the first line of the part illustrates the continuity of the whole: "Infinite consanguinity it bears—." Now, while the reference of the pronoun is to the word *theme* of the next line, both the pronoun and its referent I take to relate to *Sea* in line 6 of "Voyages II." Also within this first line is to be found that almost indescribable identification of the sea as the beloved and as lover itself. The sea bears "infinite consanguinity" to the beloved; therefore, since it is so like the one on whom love is lavished, the sea can be loved for itself, or at least for those things in it consanguineous to the beloved. Each sailor has something of the sea in him. One cannot love the sailor without also loving the sea.

If the lover on the shore can love the sailor and the sea, and if the sailor can love both the sea, as he must, and the lover on the shore, it is not too much to assume that the sea, in a metaphorical sense, can

also love the sailor. This seems to be what Crane is saying in "Voyages III."

> While ribboned water lanes I wind
> Are laved and scattered with no stroke
> Wide from your side whereto this hour
> The sea lifts, also, reliquary hands.

The sea loves in the only way it can. It swallows the sailor and receives his bones as a reliquary receives the bones of martyred saints. These bones are held on the bottom of the sea in the same way that the wave holds "The dice of drowned men's bones" in "At Melville's Tomb."

Death in the sea is gentle; it would be gentle to the sailor; it

> Presumes no carnage, but this single change,—
> Upon the steep floor flung from dawn to dawn
> The silken skilled transmemberment of song;

Not fearing such a death himself, the lover asks both the sailor and the sea to "Permit me voyage, love, into your hands . . ." Note that "Voyages III," because of the ellipsis mark, has no ending.

It seems to me that "Voyages IV" offers greater difficulties than any other part of the poem. Crane has here indulged extensively in his poetic shorthand (See Barbara Herman's essay in volume 58 of the *Sewanee Review*). Perhaps the only way we can read the first stanza of "Voyages IV" is to assume that the word *whose* refers to the *you* which stands for the sailor; we must also assume that *you* is the subject of *suppose:*

> [You]
> Whose counted smile of hours and days, suppose
> I know as spectrum of the sea

and the subject of *pledge* is not *you,* but the subsequently introduced *I:*

> *I* know as spectrum of the sea and [I] pledge
> Vastly now parting gulf on gulf of wings
> Whose circles bridge, I know, (from palms to the severe
> Chilled albatross's white immutability)
> No stream of greater love advancing now
> Than, singing, this mortality alone
> Through clay aflow immortally to you.

Once again the movement is from the lover on shore to the beloved at sea. The thing moving is a stream of love, pledged by the *I* of the

poem, and in its movement parting the winged creatures that circle endlessly over the surface of the waters.

The second stanza starts by describing what comprises the stream of love. It is made up of "All fragrance irrefragibly [*sic*]" aflow to the beloved. And being part of the flow—"this mortality alone"—the *I* of the poem

> claim[s]
> Madly meeting logically in this hour
> And region that is ours to wreathe again,
> Portending eyes and lips and making told
> The chancel port and portion of our June—

The symbolism of the sea in this fourth part of the "Voyages" is once again of love. The imagery has shifted in the four segments from death in "Voyages I" to love in II, to death in III, and, in correct succession, to love again in IV. But at this point the symbols merge so completely that it becomes difficult to separate them. In the third stanza of "Voyages IV," the lover feels that he must lose himself in "fatal tides" in order to reach his beloved, even if reaching him only through the "incarnate word." The poet loses himself and resigns "harbor shoulders," that is, leaves the safety of the land to mingle "mutual blood"; leaves the safety of the land "transpiring as foreknown/ And widening noon" in the beloved's breast. The poet must leave the harbors

> For islands where must lead inviolably
> Blue latitudes and levels of your eyes,—

However, we must accept the overwhelming affirmation of "Voyages IV" because of the last two lines with their overpowering sexual imagery and symbolism. I think the lines are better understood if we take *still* to modify both *exclaim* and *receive,* inserting a comma between the two verbs for clarity:

> In this expectant, still exclaim [,] receive
> The secret oar and petals of all love.

With "Voyages V" we leave, for the moment, the difficulties of Crane's violent linguistic contortions for the fairly straightforward diction, though still astounding imagery, of this most explicit of the sections. The symbolism remains complex; for here the beloved and the lover are together, and to one the sea means life and love, while to the other the sea means death and separation. The opening stanza, in the

same startling imagery, the same flooding brilliance of the "benzine rinsings from the moon" of "Lachrymae Christi," describes the bay estuaries as the agents which will take the beloved away:

> Meticulous, past midnight in clear rime,
> Infrangible and lonely, smooth as though cast
> Together in one merciless white blade—
> The bay estuaries fleck the hard sky limits.

The lovers have awakened from a night's sleep together; they stand at an open window looking at this arm of the sea. The lover who must remain on shore regrets that sleep already has been broken and that the night must end. The moonlight, which in its passage like a midnight sun records the relentless movement of time, cannot be stopped:

> For we
> Are overtaken. Now no cry, no sword
> Can fasten or deflect this tidal wedge,
> Slow tyranny of moonlight, moonlight loved
> And changed . . .

However, the sailor sees in the estuary his other love; he perhaps already is longing to be again on the face of the ocean. " 'There's/ Nothing like this in the world,' " he says; and the lover cannot understand because he does not want to. Yet, if he wanted to he could; for he knows he "cannot touch your hand and look/ Too, into that godless cleft of sky." If he too looked, he would understand the sailor's love for the sea; for indeed, he knows it without looking. But having been seduced by an image of the sea which is partial to the "pieties of lovers' hands," the lover never dreamed the sea would commit its own act of piracy, the theft of his beloved:

> No,
> In all the argosy of your bright hair I dreamed
> Nothing so flagless as this piracy.

The disillusioned lover can only ask for a momentary prolongation of the night's love. The sailor already has the vision of the sea in his eyes; perhaps in sleep he can be brought back from far away:

> But now
> Draw in your head, alone and too tall here.
> Your eyes already in the slant of drifting foam;
> Your breath sealed by the ghosts I do not know:
> Draw in your head and sleep the long way home.

In opening "Voyages VI," Crane uses the same device with which he opened "Voyages II" and "Voyages IV," a device which, despite its tortured character, adds unity to the group of poems as a whole. It is the device of starting with some sort of fragment, a fragment which must be completed from an understanding of the previous poems. In "Voyages VI" we might supply the imperative from "Voyages II": "Take this Sea

> Where icy and bright dungeons lift
> Of swimmers their lost morning eyes,
> And ocean rivers, churning, shift
> Green borders under stranger skies . . . ."

Of course, it is not reasonable to expect the reader to find a referent some eighty lines or four sections earlier; therefore, all we need supply is the fragment, "Here is a place."

I think it is to be assumed in "Voyages VI" that the lover irrevocably has lost his beloved, either because the sailor has returned to his first love, the sea, or because the sea has swallowed the sailor in death.

The swimmers of the first stanza are those who go on the face of the ocean, the sailors. They are now in "icy and bright dungeons," looking upward with lost eyes. They are, in fact, beneath the surface of the water, on the bottom of the sea. This is the same image found in "At Melville's Tomb": "Frosted eyes there were that lifted altars." From Crane's letter to Harriet Monroe we know the poet is speaking of "drowned men."

Steadily, of line 5, must modify *shift,* two lines above; and though the beloved is lost, the sea is eternal: "ocean rivers . . . shift . . . steadily

> as a shell secretes
> Its beating leagues of monotone,
> Or as many waters trough the sun's
> Red kelson past the cape's wet stone . . . ."

The kelson, the major longitudinal member of a ship's bottom, is the red tint the sun's reflection leaves running down the length of a trough of the sea.

I think that now, the lover, having fought it while his beloved was alive, has fallen in love with the sea. He too is afloat on the "ocean rivers," his "eyes pressed black against the prow" in search for what it is that one finds in the sea. He is the sea's

> . . . derelict and blinded guest

Waiting, afire, what name, unspoke,
I cannot claim: let thy waves rear
More savage than the death of kings,
Some splintered garland for the seer.

The seer is the prophet-poet. Out of the whole experience he is to get the "imaged word." However, that word is somewhere "beyond siroccos harvesting/ The solstice thunders." It can be heard only indistinctly in the way one hears thunder as it seems to be creeping away, in the way one hears the rumble of a ledge of cliff breaking off from the mountainside, in the way one hears a sail flutter distantly on a windy April day. Somewhere beyond is

Creation's blithe and petalled word
To the lounged goddess when she rose
Conceding dialogue with eyes
That smile unsearchable repose—

Brooks and Warren in *Understanding Poetry* think the goddess is Aphrodite. I think perhaps she is Aurora, the goddess who arises from her couch each day with the freshness that follows repose. Creation's word is both the *logos* of St. John and the poet's creative word. In both cases dawn follows creation. In the cosmogony of the fourth gospel, after the *word* there was light. After the creation of the "imaged word," there is the dawn of the new insights presented by the prophet-poet.

At this point there is a sharp break in the continuity, though not in the imagery and the symbolism. The lover who has turned his affection to the sea finds an island which symbolizes the female sex organs. The island represents a "fervid covenant" and is an

Unfolded floating dais before
Which rainbows twine continual hair—

It is "Belle Isle,"

white echo of the oar!

And here the oar has the same sexual reference we found in the last line of "Voyages IV." Belle Isle, however, also symbolizes the achievement of the "imaged word." Creation's word, finally, is the only

unbetrayable reply
Whose accent no farewell can know.

"Voyages," then, has a love theme. It opens with a prophecy that the sea will prove cruel. The lover finds peace and happiness in the

contemplation of an actual voyage to his beloved. The sea threatens the death it first portended; and yet, once more the sea offers the way to the beloved. There is a meeting, though there are implications that it is the last; and finally, the lover, having lost his beloved, has only the sea and his poetry left.

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NORMAN FRIEDMAN is in the English Department at the University of Connecticut.

DAVID GALLER is a young New York writer. A group of his poems is offered in the current issue of *Origin.*

DONALD JUSTICE has received a Rockefeller Foundation Creative Writing Fellowship through the University of Iowa.

H. C. MORRIS, of the English Department at Indiana, has published criticism and poetry in *Perspective, Epoch,* the *Antioch Review,* etc.

HERBERT MORRIS, of Philadelphia, has contributed verse to the *Sewanee Review, Poetry,* and *Beloit Poetry Journal,* among others.

R. LEE PERRY has lived chiefly in Miami and on Key Largo, but is at present in the Army, stationed at Camp Gordon. The *Hudson Review* and the *Western Review* have accepted his work.

SHEILA PRITCHARD has been published in *Poetry* and other journals. She lives in Detroit.

RAYMOND RADIGUET is best known for his novels, *Count d'Orgel* and *Devil in the Flesh.*

WILLIAM JAY SMITH is the author of *Celebration at Dark,* a book of poems. He is working on a novel, *The Straw Market,* and a collection of translations from Laforgue.

WALLACE STEVENS'S *Collected Poems* were published in October on the occasion of his 75th birthday. He has been a faithful contributor to ACCENT since Vol. I, No. 1 (1940).

HOLLIS SUMMERS teaches at the University of Kentucky. His fiction and poetry have been widely published, and he is the editor of a new collection of stories by Kentucky writers.

BYRON VAZAKAS is the author of a book of poems, *Transfigured Night.*

NEIL WEISS is one of the *Five Poets* published this fall by Golden Goose Press.

LEONARD WOLF'S poems have been in *Atlantic Monthly,* the *Yale Review,* etc.

SANDRA WOOL contributed a study of *The Cocktail Party* to the 10th Anniversary issue of the quarterly.

HAZARD ADAMS:
Blake and His Age

DAVID V. ERDMAN: *Blake, Prophet Against Empire, A Poet's Interpretation of the History of His Times.* Princeton University Press.

In his essay on Chaucer in the Descriptive Catalogue, William Blake wrote:

> The characters of Chaucer's pilgrims are the characters which comprise all ages and nations: as one age falls, another rises, different to mortal sight, but to immortals only the same; for we see the same characters repeated again and again . . . . I have known multitudes of those who would have been monks in the age of monkery, who in this deistical age are deists.

Blake's theory of history was cyclic, or rather spiral, built on the assumption of organized analogous repetition. In most past studies of Blake the writers have been rightfully preoccupied with the symbolic form of his myth: the abstract significance of his cosmic figures as they repeat their timeless acts throughout the contrariwise whirl of history. The best of these studies, as I see it, is Northrop Frye's *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton, 1946). It is there that one first begins to understand the enormity and symmetry of Blake's vision. We know that Blake was impressed by the timelessness of Chaucer's vision, and Mr. Frye has pointed out that a similar timeless vision appears in Spenser, whose influence on Blake was very great. We know also that there is allegory in Spenser (scholars have been slogging through it for years). We know too that Blake thought that poetry was properly created by means of "minute particulars."

Professor David V. Erdman, in his new book on Blake, has taken the next logical step. He has sought to discover just what many of the "minute particulars" hidden under a disguise of sublime allegory in Blake's prophecies really represent, what particular occurrences in Blake's own time represented for him the greater timeless archetypes which are traditionally the subjects of all great poets. In his work Professor Erdman has performed what any Blake scholar will immediately recognize is an incredibly painstaking job of research, for he has discovered references in Blake to occurrences in late eighteenth-century Europe which only someone well versed in the history of the time as well as in Blake might reasonably have been expected to detect. These discoveries are often illuminating to a very high degree, explaining previously unresolved difficulties of interpretation and casting light in former darkness. For example, Professor Erdman tells us that the character, Bath, in the prophecies is more than a town, for he speaks as a minister of Bath, Richard Warner, was then speaking out in pamphlets. This is a minute point, but it illuminates much more about Blake's manner of writing than would first appear. In other instances, especially in the early prophecies, where Professor Erdman's methods of research are most fruitful, a whole allegory of contemporary history is disclosed. In the process

past errors of interpretation are vigorously but politely corrected. Professor Erdman would certainly not hesitate to recognize that Blake scholarship past and future is a communal effort and in some ways a procedure of trial and error.

Blake's reputation for madness, though rejected by poets and all those who know him well, is still accepted in a diluted form by many pedants, who cover their incomprehension of the prophecies with accusations of hoax. Professor Erdman's book should go a long way towards proving even to the diehards that Blake *was* saying something coherent. But this new interpretation of Blake, through no fault of Professor Erdman, may tend to emphasize something in Blake's work which, as in Spenser's, is ultimately of secondary value. In the minds of some the historical allegory and that alone, because easily explainable, may become Blake's only meaning. For this reason Blake's words on Chaucer should be kept in mind by anyone reading Professor Erdman's fine book. It is still the fearful symmetry and timelessness of Blake's vision which is of first importance, not the allegory.

In a sense, then, it is a good thing for Blake and for us that Professor Erdman's book comes along after instead of before the studies of Damon, Frye, and others. Otherwise Blake scholarship might still, like Spenser scholarship, be lost in the forests of allegory with no attention paid to the archetypal pattern Blake sought to prove existing in his own microcosmic cycle of history.

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